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THE EASTERN BATTLEFIELD

THE Greek evacuation of Western Thrace, the enforced retirement of the Jugoslavs, the German break into the Vardar Valley and the swift threat to Salonika make ugly but by no means unexpected reading. When the Jugoslavs decided to resist they were under no illusion that they could save most of their country from German occupation; nor did the Greeks imagine that against the Germans they could repeat their successes against the Italians. We all knew that initial German victories in the Balkans were inevitable. The decision to send British troops and material to Greece was taken not on a short-run expectation of successes but on certain fundamental and long-distance calculations.

It was a vast and complicated battlefield that the British Government had to consider. What happened in Addis Ababa and Benghazi one day might affect the fate of Belgrade or Salonika the next. The risks and the decision were inescapable. To have abandoned the Greeks would have been even more disastrous politically than strategically. We had pledged ourselves to support small peoples defending their liberties and their homes: any hope of our leadership against the Nazis in the Balkans and the Near East would have disappeared if we had not stood at the side of the Greeks when the Germans attacked. The effects in Turkey, Russia and on all the peoples of South-East Europe would have been catastrophic. The Government had then really no choice, even though the dispatch of troops involved grave risks. The risks of transport to the Greek peninsular have been triumphantly surmounted. The German counter in North Africa on the other hand has been more swift and effective than anyone expected. The handling of the news about the recapture of Benghazi was singularly inept. It was futile for Cairo to explain away the presence of German divisions with tanks and the full equipment of mechanised war in Libya: that the Germans could arrive there in such force is highly disturbing. In the same way the public has not yet been warned of the possible implications of the pro-Axis move in Iraq. These reverses must be seen in the perspective of the whole battle for leadership against the Axis Powers in the Middle and Near East. It is with this consideration in mind that we have followed the astonishingly swift and efficient campaigns in Eritrea and Abyssinia. It was not on Addis Ababa alone that General Cunningham was marching from the sands of Somaliland. He was also marching to the defence of Athens. It is no small achievement to have made some amends for the shameful episode of six years ago when rather than upset a Fascist dictator (when it was still easy to do), Britain and France preferred to sacrifice at once the Ethiopian people and the hope of preventing war in Europe. It is good that British arms have now restored the exiled Emperor to his throne. But what we await with impatience is the news that the road from his capital to Massawa is open, in order that our seasoned and victorious troops may hasten to the battlefield where the freedom of Europe is the stake. How pertinent this reckoning is the news from Washington assures us: Mr. Roosevelt has responded to the elimination of the Italians from the Red Sea by a decision to send arms to the Serbs and Greeks directly through its waters. We do not forget that Suez and Egypt have to be defended against the thrust of the German mechanised forces which contrived, with a skill that reflects credit on their Staff, to cross the sea to Libya. But subject to this necessity, we should wish to see every available transport on its way to help the Greeks and Jugoslavs.

If we have stated the human obligation warmly, we are satisfied that the most realistic calculations point in the same direction. Since Munich the factor that has told most heavily against us in Europe has been the doubt whether we could or would support our own friends. The test in the Balkans has come, it may be, sooner than we should have wished: it was not we but Hitler who flung the gauntlet across the Danube. We must grasp, none the less, the chance that fortune sends us: it may not come again. At stake in this desperate battlefield is our repute as a trustworthy ally and as the leader of all those who revolt against Nazi domination. The weight of numbers and machines may well be against us. We have to face the probability that Salonika will fall—it may have fallen already. The Germans have already reached the Aegean. But on the other side the Jugoslavs are reported to have captured Scutari: they will succeed if

they can spare the troops, in driving the Italians from Albania and there is at least reason to hope that both the Greeks and the Jugoslavs may hold on to their mountain fastnesses so long as the British fleet can supply and reinforce them from the sea. Here in the long run is the crux: if Britain can obtain control of the Adriatic and maintain mastery of the Aegean a permanent centre of resistance to the Nazis in Europe will have been established.

One thing is clear. It is a gain to have forced Germany to fight on two fronts. The dangerous implications of the latest Nazi attack has stung the Russians into a hostile demonstration; their offer of a pact of friendship to Hitler's latest victim amounts to a public rebuff. The Turks are still quiescent, though Stalin's promise has disposed of their plausible excuse for inaction. But the initiative must come from us. Our future allies are watching us, from the fjords of Norway and the workers quarters of Lyons to the palaces of Ankara, where statesmen count the cost. They will rally to us to-morrow if we earn our right to lead to-day.

Economic Notes (*from an Industrial Correspondent*)

Although the Minister of Agriculture acquitted himself well in the debate on the problem of food production, the House was left with the feeling that the Government, and the War Cabinet in particular, is not displaying sufficient energy and imagination in its agricultural campaign. It was Mr. Lloyd George who in a brilliant speech emphasised the fact that bald comparisons with the last war were misleading and dangerous. From the strategic aspect the situation was much more ominous and called for more drastic, more comprehensive and even revolutionary methods. It was a high Tory M.P., Lord Winterton, who complained of the amount of still uncultivated land, and suspected undue tenderness towards golf courses and private parks. The Minister was eloquent on average figures but silent, perhaps for necessary reasons, on production statistics. You do not eat acres, and you cannot feed the people on perches and rods; it must be on quarters of grain and sacks of potatoes, declared Mr. Lloyd George in a characteristic sally. Members were critical of the situation in respect of drainage, man-power, machinery and fertilisers, and the House realising that the problem was more than a departmental issue rather resented the absence of the War Cabinet from the debate. The problems of food distribution were deliberately omitted from the discussion and another day may be devoted to this side of the question.

* * *

The Minister of Transport announces the establishment of a new War Transport Council "to advise him on questions of transport policy." The new Council will, however, be "invited to put forward any proposals which in their view would increase the contribution of transport to the war effort." In a rather lame explanation the Ministry states that "until now action has been mainly directed to the strengthening, and, where necessary, the reorganisation of each separate department of transport." There is to be a "new stage." The members of the new Council include representatives of the employers and employees in the transport business—and the Parliamentary and Permanent Secretaries of the Ministry. Considering the increasing complaints about the inefficiency and lack of co-ordination in transport (especially in the ports) which threatens to develop into the prime bottleneck of our war effort the appointment of this new body is to be welcomed. It may become a useful clearing house of information about the state of the different transport services in view of the probable demands on them and also give valuable advice for co-ordination. But it is still doubtful whether such a body—without adequate staff and powers—will be "a sufficiently lively machine equal to the heaviest tasks that may be laid upon it in the months to come." We still run our services and production on the basis of profitability, and in the absence of much closer financial amalgamation and technical pooling it is difficult to see how the maximum use can be made of existing facilities. This is quite apart from the fact that the existing financial arrangements with the railroads have proved mistakenly conceived and inimical to a smooth mobilisation of the war potential. But perhaps this is not the last "stage in the process steadily pursued since the war began of adapting our transport system to the needs of war." One wishes that the stages would follow more quickly.

The provisional figure for shipping losses for the past week is 77,000 tons. The disquieting feature of to-day's statement, however, is the further amendment of the figure for the eightieth week of the war from the original of 74,000 tons to no less than 146,000 tons. This is not the first time in recent months that such drastic revision in the Admiralty statements has taken place. The difficulties in the way of accurate reporting (especially with surface raiders loose in the Atlantic) are very great. The Admiralty might consider postponing publication by a week or fortnight. As in the case of the loss of Benghazi or the sudden official discovery of the long suspected bad leaks in our blockade, these official explanations and amendments are very harmful to morale. The Ministers ought to have learned by now that unwarranted complacency shakes confidence far more than bad news. We are also still in the defensive phase of the war. In that phase bad news is inevitable. But they must begin to realise that there is not much time to be lost if we are to put ourselves into an impregnable position. We must cut consumption directly by rationing, and we must do our utmost to increase the home supplies of materials. What the Nazis could do in *Ersatz* and low-grade ore exploitation we can do too. Only please let us cut the cackle.

* * *

I see that Henry Ford is now laying plans for building a huge factory for the mass-production of aeroplanes on the lines of his production of cheap cars. I wonder whether this will really work. Building aircraft is a tricky business; and from all I hear attempts at mass-production over here have been none too successful. The strains are so much greater for planes than for cars that much more exact machinery and fitting are needed in order to turn out a finished product that will be reasonably safe and efficient. I remember some American planes built during the last war that were sheer death-traps, and cost us nearly as much to make fit for service as they cost to buy from the makers. Doubtless, technique has improved very greatly since then. But the achievement of the R.A.F. in this war has been based very largely on the high quality of its machines. Numbers are not everything; and morale, which counts for a very great deal in the air, depends mainly on faith in the efficiency of the instrument. We don't want machines that will betray their pilots—the more so because skilled pilots are even harder to produce at will than effective planes.

The Budget in the House (*by a Parliamentary Correspondent*)

Sir Kingsley Wood opened his first Budget to a moderately crowded House. Service members were largely absent and they accounted for the gaps on some of the benches. From the outset the Chancellor made a good impression in spite of his monotonous delivery of a written speech. Members had in mind the way in which, when Lord Simon was Chancellor, he burked the realities of the wartime situation in his last Budget, whereas Sir Kingsley Wood discussed the past and the present in realistic economic terms, rationing, controls, concentration of industry. Mild applause greeted his first reference to the Lease and Lend Act, otherwise the House was silent.

When he turned to the future, the House generally was relieved at his proposal to stabilise the cost of living, but where was the wages policy that should go with it? It was not enough to tell the Labour Members, as the Chancellor did, that stabilisation of the cost of living depends upon wages not getting out of hand. His proposal to refund 20 per cent. of Excess Profits Duty to industry after the war, came as a surprise to the Industrial Barons, who had hoped for something new. Its significance was more fully grasped in discussion in the lobbies after the Chancellor's speech. There was a tendency to link it up with concentration of industry and to wonder where these two measures would lead in the way of unexpected industrial development.

The House took the increase in Income Tax in silence. The blow was expected. Coupling of reduced allowances with forced saving caused a babble of comment above which the Chancellor could scarcely be heard. Its ingenuity caused a general laugh on its first announcement.

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General comment afterwards centred on these points. In the first part of his speech the Chancellor showed that he grasped the economic implications of totalitarian war. Why then did he plan his Budget on conventional financial lines, instead of introducing complete rationing of essential civilian consumption goods? His estimate of voluntary savings was also questioned in view of the heavier taxation and forced saving now introduced. The third point in the mind of more informed Members was whether the Chancellor's estimate of the internal war effort was high enough in the light of current German war expenditure. To bridge the gap between the two, such large deliveries may be required from the United States that adequate tonnage may not be available for carrying it across the Atlantic.

Last week's debate on industrial man-power, initiated by Mr. Simmonds on the Civil Estimates, must be unique in recent Parliamentary history. The employers made a concerted attack on Bevin for his failure to provide them with adequate supplies of labour and for withdrawing from them the right to sack. Bevin retorted in kind with a freedom he has not hitherto used in the House. He ignored the collective responsibility of the Cabinet and refused to take the blame for the failures of other Ministers. He made a slashing attack on the inefficiency of management. The debate proved national unity in the industrial field to be rather less than skin deep. It also proved how easily fundamental national interests are obscured when Industrial Barons and Trade Union leaders monopolise the floor to the exclusion of those in all parties who strive to represent the interests of the community as a whole. Hansard for the 2nd April should be read in conjunction with the Prime Minister's two speeches of the 27th March. Some very hard thinking is required by those who are determined that a better England shall emerge out of this war.

In my notes of last week I perpetrated a howler. I attributed Mr. George Strauss' peroration to Mr. Hammersley. I apologise to both gentlemen. The mistake was not unnatural after reading Mr. Hammersley's little pamphlet "An argument in favour of an Annual Capital Tax in Time of War," an argument which the Chancellor might well have taken to heart before introducing his Budget.

FIRST THOUGHTS ON THE BUDGET

THIS year's Budget is remarkable; with the experience of eighteen months' liabilities as a guide, the Chancellor appears to have endeavoured to frame "for the duration" the principles of fiscal strategy applicable to totalitarian war. As such, the Budget proposals must be judged by two tests. First, do they provide adequately and by satisfactory means for withdrawing from the community purchasing power which would otherwise, to the detriment of our war effort, make demands both on domestic production and imports? Secondly, is this objective achieved without either unduly discouraging in individuals the will to earn by work or damaging public morale by creating resentment at what would be felt to be unfairly distributed or excessively onerous taxation? Excluding imports of munitions and foodstuffs which will, in part, be paid for by gold or the proceeds of short-term loans from the Dominions and India, and in much larger part be obtained on "Lease-and-Lend" terms from the United States, Sir Kingsley Wood put his prospective expenditure at £3,700 millions. Against this, on the basis of existing taxation, he had revenue of £1,636 millions in sight. His decision to rely exclusively on increased direct taxation for additional revenue is sound. In war economics indirect taxes are illogical since their fruitfulness depends on consumption—the very thing most to be avoided. But can it be said with any assurance that the raising of the standard rate of income tax to 10s. and the reduction of allowances will suffice to prevent a considerable dose of inflation and rising prices? In the current year the further withdrawal of free purchasing power will be £150 million; the unbridged gap to be covered by domestic borrowing will be £1,900 millions. Apart from the growing exploitation of the tax-free "expense account" racket by business executives, it would be very optimistic to suppose that private and corporate saving will reach that figure, particularly in view of the greatly enhanced tax demands which the small saver of the £300-£800 income-class must meet. Moreover, it remains to be seen whether the rising costs of war will not call for a supplementary vote of credit before the year is out.

The pill is sweetened for the direct taxpayer by the arrangement whereby a portion of the increased tax will be held as a credit repayable after the war. This adaptation of Mr. Keynes's plan for compulsory saving shows evidence of an unusual and welcome vision on the part of the Treasury. It should do something to mitigate the feeling that it is not worth while putting in extra effort for earnings so heavily mulcted. But even so, income tax will fall with harsh severity on many middle-class and upper-working-class households who cannot readily rid themselves of fixed commitments in the way of rent, rates, mortgage interest, insurance premiums and so forth. Here, in fact, lies the weakness of the present Budget. We have consistently urged in these columns that the economics of totalitarian war are analogous to siege economics, and that the logical and equitable method of mobilising the community would be to require everybody to serve for a private soldier's pay and rations. This objective cannot be attained in a day, and it may be said that the present budget, in abstracting £94,000 from an income of £100,000 and rendering it impossible to retain much more than £6,000 a year out of earned income, goes far towards a "siege economics" system. But there will still remain a very substantial divergence between the "free" purchasing power left in one man's hands and another's. Unless spending is to be universally rationed to a maximum sum per head per week by means of coupons detachable at the time of each purchase, it would have been sounder and more equitable to have raised income tax still further, but to have exempted from its incidence an amount calculated to cover (with due regard to varying fixed commitments) minimum living costs.

The arrangement for a deferred rebate on E.P.T. is dubious. There is justification for the relief of hard cases and the correction of anomalies. No business should be called up to encroach more heavily upon its capital resources than any other line of business. Thus special consideration is warranted in the case of enterprises, such as mining, with wasting assets. Due allowances should be made for capital extensions, whatever the form in which the money capital is supplied. It is important to note that the Chancellor did make concessions on these points. But he went on to make a further concession to enable businesses to set aside additional reserves for the post-war period. Now the fact that particular businesses, the lucky ones, can now stake out a claim to draw on post-war resources of labour and materials does nothing to make the post-war position of industry in general any better. This is the old confusion between real and money economics. It simply means that certain firms will be in a better position to command resources while other firms, those not now earning excess profits, will not have this advantage. We do not know which industries or firms ought to expand after the war and which to contract. Their war-time fortunes have no relevance to the post-war situation. The concession is merely a war-time bribe disguised as a post-war gratuity.

The White Paper issued in explanation of the Budget aroused the admiration of everyone. It is wonderful that such lucid economic analysis should be prepared in the Treasury and in the Central Statistical Office whose existence was revealed for the first time officially. It bounds on the miraculous that it should also be published (and why not guarantee its regular publication?). Given a financial approach to the war economic problem the imagination shown by the advisers of the Chancellor in framing their proposals deserves high praise. But there are some far-seeing people who think this whole approach inadequate; the very fact that it is so good and yet in this situation still inadequate proves that we cannot organise the war economic system on a financial basis. Some M.P.s dealing with the Budget on Tuesday morning said that we needed a complete system of rationing and all-in control. In order to match the German war effort they hold that we must spend at least £500 millions more on armaments, and since it will be impossible to import sufficient raw materials, foodstuffs and finished war supplies, the output of agriculture, mining and of factories producing substitute goods, must therefore be further expanded. Though the present level of taxes seems crushing, even the contemplated war expenditure of £3,500 millions (excluding supplies from the U.S.A.) will imply a considerable inflation. This is demonstrated by the White Paper itself: to hope for a voluntary savings and disinvestment of £1,900 millions in the coming year (really £2,000 millions as £100 millions got lost in the Budget Speech) is far too optimistic. Another £500 million expenditure would completely upset the applecart. There is a solution but that solution demands a drastic revision of our concept of war economies. It demands technical and financial pooling in industry, mining and agriculture under direct state control; it demands direct control of consumption. In a phrase it demands what has been demanded for all these months that have been lost—the economics of total war.

THE HOUSE OF COMMONSENSE

THIS Parliament is now steadily talking itself into lasting for "at least three years" after the war is over. It is already the oldest Parliament since 1892, and is well on its way to being the longest of all Parliaments since a democratic franchise was instituted in 1832 (record 6 years and 36 days, in 1865). It has even removed the occasional opinion check of a by-election, so that the other day I found out, quite by chance, that in place of Sir Arnold Wilson I had as my new representative in Parliament Lord Camrose's eldest son, who appears to be virtually unknown to the electors of the Hitchin Division.

In wartime the outlets for public opinion are necessarily curtailed. This makes it all the easier for M.P.s to get out of touch. A detailed investigation through last winter showed that while a considerable group of people were satisfied that the House of Commons adequately represented the country, an equal-sized and more emphatic group were definitely dissatisfied:

> "You never can tell what they're up to." "Parliament consists of 615 sheep." "It's only 50 per cent. awake," and so forth.

The prestige of the present House of Commons in the public estimation has unfortunately declined, ever since Munich, and despite the exceptional degree of popular confidence in the Prime Minister, public opinion shows signs of becoming *dangerously* indifferent or cynical about the basic institution of this democracy. The remarkable sabbatarian demonstration of Parliamentary opinion last week will hardly enhance this prestige. Seldom has there been such an obvious case of difference between the mood of Parliament and people. *The Economist* (a paper not usually given to violent comment) went so far as to call it: "a disgraceful exhibition and the best possible argument for dissolving the 1935 Parliament at the earliest convenient moment."

By 144 votes to 136 the Commons rejected an Order in Council which gave *local authorities* the *option* to permit Sunday theatres and music-halls. It did not in itself permit a single entertainment to open, or introduce any precedent not already established for cinemas. This is the *only* Order in Council that has been annulled by an adverse vote. It is also the only one which really did something to *increase* in one small direction the restricted liberties of the citizen. The Home Secretary described the measure as "desirable in the interest of the prosecution of the war."

The principal speech against the Order was delivered by Thomas Magnay (an accountant, aged 65), starting on a theme which is now popular among the comfortable classes (*cf.* the recent *Times* leader):

> We know that art and literature have been befouled; we have only to see some statues in public places, which are supposed to be things of beauty and ought to be a joy for ever, to know how art has been debased. . . . Things are coming to a dreadful pass for anyone who has eyes to see, who has spiritual vision.

Warming up, inevitably via jazz and crooners, he really got down to the Christian talk about his opponents:

> I say that all this technique of sapping and mining the morale of our people that has gone on for years is fifth column work. I say that deliberately. There is no chance of Hitler or anyone else outside this country forcing his will upon our people by open methods; but they are far too clever, unscrupulous and subtle to try that . . . their plan is to get the people away from the churches.

Alas, it takes less than a fifth column to get people away from the churches; on any ordinary Sunday more than 90 per cent. are already away.

The seconder, Sir Francis Fremantle, 69, son of the late Dean of Ripon, admitted the small proportion of the population who go to church on Sunday and shifted to new ground:

> I wish to speak from the point of view of the *health* of those concerned and the health of the nation . . . in the first place, I want to represent this as being a further inroad on what has seemed to us in the Public Health world as being a very serious question of attacks on the mental health of the people at large. One thinks of what are called the workers, the great mass of the insured population, but it applies to everyone equally.

It was at this intellectual level that the case against the opening of theatres was conducted.

Such arguments were sufficient to obtain a Parliamentary majority. Not since Mr. Churchill became Prime Minister has the House been so full for a debate! Yet under half the Members voted. No doubt some abstained because they did not realise how much popular support they had. But there can be little doubt that others, mistaking furious letters for an uproar and anxious to keep in with the constituency influence of the clergy, thought it would be wiser to keep out of the division lobbies.

Speaker after speaker in the debate admitted the relevance of public opinion and claimed to reflect it. Letters and press cuttings were bandied to and fro. Mr. Magnay said that on hearing of the Order, "the nation was shocked and grieved," and sent him "the most intimate letters, beautiful and devoted letters." Mr. Crowder read an extract from a letter and claimed that the soldiers did not want any Sunday shows. Col. Wedgwood supported this. But Mr. Profumo, one of the few young M.P.s and in the Army, went to the other extreme and said that soldiers were 100 per cent. in favour and the letters he had received on the other side were all organised and non-spontaneous. Beverley Baxter, A. P. Herbert, James Griffiths and J. C. Watkins all argued about mailbags and popular demand. What was popular demand at the time?

The highest degree of feeling in favour of Sunday theatres and music-halls was found in the largest aggregation of people concerned, London, where in the week preceding the debate 81 per cent. were in favour of Sunday opening, 8 per cent. were against, and 11 per cent. were non-committal.

Mass-Observation.

Usually, when the House of Commons passes or rejects some measure, a majority of people tend afterwards to agree with the result. This is a regular feature of opinion surveys, and means that Parliament has successfully guided and led public opinion. But in this case, after the debate, a large majority were still in favour of Sunday opening, 70 per cent. as against 19 per cent. who now agreed with Parliament's annulment. The same situation was found all over the country, with the majority falling but remaining *after* the debate. In Epsom, for instance, where the member Sir Archibald Southby had voted against, 23 per cent. approved his action and 54 per cent. disapproved it. In Oxford 29 per cent. were against Sunday shows and 55 per cent. in favour.

Much play was made in the debate about the antagonism of Wales and Scotland. The critical balance of opposition votes came from Scottish and Welsh M.P.s. Our results from Scotland nevertheless indicated that there too the opposition (this particular Order does not affect Scotland) came from a well organised minority. This is confirmed from one of the alleged hotbeds of opposition, Clydeside, where an interesting survey was undertaken by the Glasgow *Evening Citizen*, the first provincial newspaper seriously to study public opinion in its area. The survey revealed ("rather to the surprise of the investigators") 71 per cent. in favour of Sunday opening, 9 per cent. indifferent and 20 per cent. against. This may be compared with a typical letter-bag result from the *Scottish Daily Express*, which received 120 letters in favour, 248 against. As the *Evening Citizen* put it: "The fact seems to be that this is a question which Scotland does not take quite so passionately as might have been imagined."

The following (necessarily rapid) analysis of the division list gives some significant facts about M.P.s who voted:

VOTING ATTITUDE TO SUNDAY OPENING

	For	Against
Total number of M.P.s	136	144
Number of Conservatives	80	78
" Nat. Liberals	1	15
" Liberals	1	8
" Labour	48	42
Members of Government	25	0
London Area constituencies	37	14
Ireland, Scotland and Wales	9	34
Women Members	6	3
Titled Members	25	42

Ironically the decisive factor was the heavy Liberal and National Liberal vote against Sunday shows. Clement Davies was the only one of 34 Nat. Lib. M.P.s to vote in favour. More Conservative M.P.s voted in favour than against. But those who voted against were more often titled persons, of the type known as "landed gentry." Among the Conservatives who gave hunting, fishing or shooting as a main recreation in *Who's Who*, two voted against, for every one in favour. Of the ten M.P.s under 40, eight were for Sunday opening. More than half of those voting against were over 60, as compared with just under a third of those in favour.

More than a million women are now running their homes and families alone, their men called up. Hundreds of thousands of soldiers, munitions workers, evacuees, are billeted away from home and largely at a loose end in their leisure time. Many millions of men and women are working harder than they have ever worked before, and are now unable to go to week-night entertainments. Only a small proportion of the population are church-goers. There is no reason to suppose that the opening of a Sunday theatre would subtract a single com-

municant—such religion could hardly be worth much, anyway. There is much evidence to show that the emptiness of Sundays in towns and cities leads to an increase in "immorality," boredom and juvenile drift. As A. P. Herbert said in the debate:

> I believe in the Church of England, and I believe in a real sense in the British Sunday. But we are at war. The bells of our churches are no longer ringing to call the people across the valleys. The sons of the village are not there to walk with their fathers across the fields. But they will come back, or some of them will: and the bells will be heard again, but in that day I do not believe that their appeal will be any the less because of the little thing that we do for those boys to-day.

No one would question the sincerity of conscience that stimulated the 144. On the same day the House of Commons rejected, by 200 votes to 2, a proposal to give C.O.s the same rights of conscience in regard to A.R.P. work as to military service. Certain religious principles of high conscience have to be sacrificed in the common interest these days. Parliament has denied the wish of a large majority, many of whom would not themselves want to go to theatres and music-halls, but who wanted others to be able to do so if they wished.

This is the Parliament which is to continue for three years after the war, so that we may be sure of a good peace and a flying start to reconstruction. Let us hope that the peace they plan for us then will be kindlier, livelier, and more in touch with the tolerant commonsense of most people, than the peace they have made for our blitz time Sabbath.

TOM HARRISSON

A LONDON DIARY

POLITICAL intrigue was already a profitable source of income in Baghdad when a friend of mine was there, watching the growing influence of the Axis, as long ago as last August. Remote from the war themselves, the rulers of Iraq stood, they thought, to win in any case. Graft is regarded there as the legitimate prerogative of office (as it once was in most countries, including England). The competition for government positions has been correspondingly keen. Everywhere my friend noticed suspicion and espionage.

> People hardly dared to speak on the streets or in the bazaars for fear of eavesdroppers. On one or two occasions, when I had made what I thought to be an innocent remark, or asked a question, the person I was walking with put a warning finger to his lips, and looked around hastily to note if we had been overheard. It was commonly believed that lists of victims were already prepared for the coming of the Nazis. When one Baghdadian Jew was taunted with the fact that his name was already on the list, he asked the Arab, a clerk in the Immigration Department: "What do you expect to gain if the Nazis do come?" "We will get the government positions that the British now hold," the Arab said.

The pro-Nazi putsch is the culmination of years of systematic preparation and propaganda by Germany. Practically every sports and social club for Arab youth is maintained from "foreign sources." For several years now, groups of Irakian students have been visiting German universities under particularly welcoming auspices. A Baghdadian is the Lord Haw Haw of the Arabic broadcast from Zeesen. The ex-Mufti of Palestine, exiled organiser of the three-year riots, and arch-enemy of the British, has made Baghdad his headquarters for over a year. It is said that he is still the centre of political activities, and spends a monthly budget of several thousand pounds. Many of his former rebel bands are now teachers in the village schools of Irak, and part of their wages go towards the costs of maintaining and developing the ex-Mufti's underground organisation.

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Discussions I hear about the part played by Prince Paul of Jugo-slavia remind me of the similar controversy about King Leopold. I have always been glad that I did not join in baiting Leopold; events have justified my analysis of his mental conflict and his own dignified conduct during the present German occupation show clearly enough that he was no Quisling but forced to surrender in a choice of desperate evils. How does it stand with Prince Paul? The evidence for judgment is not yet adequate. Two theories are going round. Some foolish people talk as if a foreign ruler who tries to save his country from the unutterable horror of German invasion is a traitor—to England! On the other side there is an odd whisper put about in some high places in London that, so far from being a Quislingovitch, Prince Paul was himself the engineer of the coup which overthrew his own regime! They suggest that when the smoke drifts away it may one day be revealed that Paul is really a good friend of ours, that he double-crossed Hitler with all the elegance that becomes a British gentleman who stoops to conquer. What evidence have we for this remarkable thesis? It is true that on the day of the Belgrade Putsch, Paul told an acquaintance that he was delighted at the news. That remark is being quoted by the London whisperers, who smile as if they know much more, as one bit of evidence that he instigated the coup. As further evidence that Paul has really been on our side right along, we are being reminded that he exiled the pro-German ex-Premier Stoyadinovitch. This, I take to be mere whitewash. It seems more plausible that Paul banished Stoyadinovitch to rid his government of a dangerous rival. After all, the neighbouring Regent Horthy acted similarly by imprisoning Hungarian Nazi leaders who were competing for Hitler's favour; but Horthy, like Paul, none the less transformed his country into a pliant Axis tool. Assuming that Paul was honest in saying that news of the Belgrade coup pleased him, this appears to show that finding himself in the same tough spot as the rulers of other countries coveted by Hitler, Prince Paul failed to clean up his own house and make a stand against the German demands. I regard him as a fair-weather politician. I cannot help asking whether those who are now trying to find so much good in him are influenced by the years he passed at Oxford or by some mistaken notion of pleasing exalted persons who are his friends and relatives in this country.

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Why is it—I do not pretend to know—that Chinese and English people immediately get on so well together? Between the British and Indian there seems always the impalpable barrier, which E. M. Forster described in the *Passage to India*—a barrier, I think, only partly to be explained by the relation of conqueror and subject. With the Japanese the difficulty of intimacy is even greater; though the Japanese and the British are both ruling and conquering peoples who depend on the seas, they seldom learn either each other's language or mental idiom. But with the Chinese there is no barrier. Or, at least, that has been my experience of a number of Chinese friendships, which have extended ever since the time when Lowes Dickinson at Cambridge first introduced me to China and the Chinese twenty years ago. To-day, with the departure of Mr. Quo Tai-chi, who has been Chinese Ambassador to Britain, I am more conscious of this affinity than ever before. One thing that has always intrigued me in our friendship has been to discover how far his Confucian calm and impassivity is more than an external habit, more than a question ot manners. When he quotes a maxim or tells a Chinese tale, the poinf of which is usually that one should keep a sense of proportion, see the beauty and understand the significance of the present without too much worry about the future, does this mean that the Chinese sage really avoids the worry and fuss of the twentieth century, or is it just a useful device for delaying hasty decisions and covering up a comfortable and Oriental reluctance to take time by the forelock? Certainly Quo Tai-chi has thrown himself into his country's struggle. In 1911, while still a student at the University of Pennsylvania, he gave up his scholarship to work with Sun Yat-sen when the Republic was first declared. He became Sun's publicity director. Later he was a delegate at the Versailles Conference and with the other Chinese delegates refused to sign the Treaty, because it conceded Shantung to the Japanese. After acting as Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs in Shanghai and negotiating the armistice agreement which stopped the fighting there, he came as Ambassador to this country in 1932 and he now leaves to become Foreign Minister of China.

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I never knew a foreign resident with a better mastery of British idiom. I often recall his remark, made when the British were beginning to feel the effects of aiding the Japanese in Manchuria, that "the air is dark with the wings of the chickens coming home to roost." Recently Quo Tai-chi's part in diplomacy has become increasingly active. His speeches, always popular here, have been less formal and ambassadorial; his spirits have obviously risen as the British Government has gradually come to recognise that the Chinese are fighting much the same enemies and for much the same reasons as ourselves. I will not pretend that he remained unmoved by the closing of the Burma road last summer. But I know that he did not doubt the continued friendship and understanding of Mr. Churchill, and that he felt confident that Britain would discover that no good would come of yielding further to Japan. His successor in London will find to-day none of that "colonial" attitude towards the Chinese that was rife in England in the earlier stages of the Sino-Japanese conflict. As Foreign Minister in Chungking Quo Tai-chi will start with the advantage of understanding the Western world, and with a record of friendship and

success in England and America that should be of the utmost value to China, particularly at a time when a vast populace is feeling its way towards a democratic conception of government which is not familiar to the older rulers of China.

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The National Savings Committee has just put out a remarkable pictorial advertisement with the heading *Under the Mattress*. The text is a piece of dialogue describing how somebody or other lost all her savings through keeping money in a house which was eventually destroyed by bombs. It goes on to say that to leave money under a mattress doing nothing was as good as robbing the soldiers: it should be put into War Savings. Now this is useful advice to the individual, but it is thundering bad economics. Economists tell me that there could be no more patriotic action at the moment than hoarding money. The safest method of hoarding is in the form of an idle bank balance. By both these methods people refrain from making any claims on the real resources of the country. Both are methods of lending to the community free of interest. War Savings certificates are merely ways of inducing people to reduce their expenditure by offering them the inducement of 3 per cent. To assert that hoarding in these circumstances is equivalent to robbing the soldiers is to show a profound ignorance of the fundamentals of war economics. Was this advertisement passed by the seminar of economics professors who are supposed to be advising the Government? If so, I award them their favourite mark—a Beta double minus.

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I heard recently of a lady who had just received a turkey from a friend in the United States, and remarked that only one out of four despatched had reached her. I hear too that floors in some smart shops in New York have been set aside for Americans who wish to purchase goods to send to their English friends. I suggest that with shipping as it now is it is quite improper for anyone to receive private gifts of goods from the United States. If parcels of food arrive they should go into the common pool. All shipping space is of the greatest value. Private gifts from the United States go to those who need them least.

* * *

The debate on the Sunday opening of theatres produced some surprising theology. One eloquent Nonconformist spokesman was overheard to make the remark that "if Christ actually turned the water into wine, which he very much doubted, it was a great mistake on his part." Dr. Little, from Ulster, committed himself to a view of the Deity which I thought was no longer extant or at least no longer expressed:

> I ask hon. Members of this House to be warned in time, and to do nothing to displease God when we need His help so much. Your vote given to-day against this Regulation for the Sunday opening of theatres and music-halls would be well pleasing to God, and in thus honouring Him, we can be sure that he will stand by us, and lead us forward to certain victory. Stand by God and He will stand by you.

The Nazis, according to the wireless news, have now banned all public dancing. On Dr. Little's view this should put the Germans one up in the competition for the favours of the Almighty. From a more mundane and less anthromorphic conception of Providence I should have argued, on the contrary, that in banning amusements the Nazis were spreading alarm and despondency and so damaging the morale of the German public.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to J. Simpson.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

In presenting the annual report of the Ladies' Association, Miss K. Kennedy, hon. secretary, stressed the importance of the material help which America was providing for the War effort, and suggested that in return she should be given spiritual help.—*Northern Whig and Belfast Post.*

The show will be opened by Mr. Jimmy Knode, of London, who will bring his bull bitch international champion, Bosworth Queen, wearing her £500 diamond collar.—*Edinburgh Evening News.*

REFINED Woman wants Cleaning, two mornings a week.—*Advertisement in West Lancashire Evening Gazette.*

Sums ranging from £5 for a Land Girl's kiss to £700 for a bullock have been raised at country sales for the Red Cross Agriculture Fund. Land Girls have found a brisk demand for kisses and also for the right to take them out to tea for £1 10s.—*Gloucester Citizen.*

EIRE

DIFFICULTIES arising from the position of Eire have been on the increase since the start of the war, without being, on either side of the water, at all comprehensively understood. It has been difficult for the people of Britain to see Eire's declaration of neutrality, and resolute abiding by her neutrality, as anything but a passively hostile and in some senses rather inhuman act. They are puzzled by Eire's apparent failure to realise the magnitude of the issues at stake, and puzzled to find a country that cared so much for freedom refusing to add her effort to freedom's war. Pigheadedness, ostrichism, childishness, apathy as to the fate of civilisation and even a dishonourable timidity have been charges levelled at Eire from this side. Pictures of Eire existing in indifferent comfort, under a British protection she does not recognise, cannot, as the rigors of war heighten, fail to present themselves to the British mind. The British popular press does not allow such pictures to lapse: the blaze of the Dublin city lights (almost Broadway, after the darkness here) suggest an unfeeling ostentation, and hams, steaks and butter are given luscious prominence by journalists who, on flying visits to Dublin, failed to obtain the desired interviews. The number of Germans at present in Eire, their social acceptability and their power were, until lately (when exact figures were given), exaggerated with a good deal of busyness. That the effect of all this has not been more inflammatory is only because Britain, at this juncture, has not much idle angry feeling to spare. But misstatements about Eire, in irresponsible columns, have a serious aspect: they hamper those responsible men who, at both sides of the water, work to maintain an equable atmosphere in which negotiations between the two countries may be carried on. If Anglo-Irish relations stand, as they must stand, this present strain, there are great hopes of something pacific and durable. Time and tact, on which there are many demands already, must go to disposing of rumours hostile to this.

Britain—that is to say, the mass of people in Britain—is not only in the dark as to Eire's intentions, but doubts, apparently, the validity of her will. It is true that a thinking minority in Eire holds that the country would, in her own interests, have done better to enter the war, on the British side, in the autumn of 1939. This reflective opinion, quietly held, is distinct from the emotional opinion of former Unionists, with their tradition of service under the British flag. But this minority recognises its own extreme smallness. It also holds that Eire, having declared for neutrality, is at this stage in no position to alter her policy. So this minority has to be ruled out: it does not now hope or wish to effect a change. That the overwhelming wish of the people of Eire was in 1939, and is still, for neutrality is an indisputable fact. In Mr. de Valera's declaration sounded the almost unanimous voice of his people—a people to whom the *positive* aspects of peace were newer, and seemed more essential, than Britain may realise. The decision—of which the momentousness was recognised—was made on behalf of a people young in political life, not yet adult in citizenship, now only just on the upgrade after internal strife and in no sense fit or ready to enter war. But the decision was not wholly grounded in weakness: it had one aspect of an assertion of strength. It was Eire's first major independent act. As such it had, and it keeps, a symbolic as well as moral significance—a significance that identifies, for the people, Eire's neutrality with her integrity. Eire feels as strongly, one might say as religiously, about her neutrality as Britain feels about her part in the war. She has invested in it her national consciousness. She has taken a stand—a stand, as she sees it, alone. All this should be kept in view when one asks oneself how the Irish, given their disposition, can embrace what seems from the outside such a colourless, timid and negative policy.

Hopes of immunity—and among the unthinking people, which means most of the people, these at the start were many—have been dashed with a sureness that ought to satisfy Eire's most savage critics at this side. Any hopes of war-profit were early dispelled. The country grasped slowly the fact known to its Government—that not only would no one be richer for all this but that one would need all one's energies to survive at all. At present Eire suffers, in all senses, and while her deprivations are far less than Britain's, they have to be met without the heroic stimulus that comes from participation in war. She is outside every circuit; she has not an admirer; she is conscious of a cold draught of disapprobation from what she had taken to be America's friendly shore. The suspension of travel between Eire and

Britain sets up an abnormal isolation, of which the effects are felt in all departments of life. Accustomed, whether as Eire or Ireland, to being much visited, not only by sportsmen and tourists but by people of cultural sympathies and enquiring mind, the country does not like segregation. Eire's immense sociability, her natural bent to the stranger make this loss more vital than it might appear. And Eire is as hard to leave, just now, as she is to enter: claustrophobia is the threat to every civilised mind. Society, localised, becomes very intensive: opinions rapidly come to boiling-point. On top of this, the countrysides have been immobilised and the cities slowed down by the disappearance of petrol: private cars—other than those of priests, clergy and doctors—are off the roads, and in the bus services that join up whole tracts of trainless country there have been severe cuts, and threats of more. More adjusted than she had realised to modern tempo, Eire finds it hard to go back to the old.

If this isolation, of and throughout Eire, results in an apparently arrogant hardening of attitude, who can wonder? It is in Eire's power, in the long-term sense, to justify her neutrality: she well may. But, temporarily, some of the measures she takes to guard it are having a rather dwarfing effect. The Censorship is an outstanding example. There is freedom of public speech, but not freedom of reporting. No home criticism of Eire's neutrality, or suggestion that this ever could or should be abandoned, is allowed mention by the press. No award or honour to any Irishman serving with H.M. Forces is allowed to be mentioned—in newspapers—so that, virtually, the hero's country is debarred from its natural pride in him. (The exodus of young Irishmen to enlist, across the Border or across the Channel, has not been stopped: it is officially ignored. The numerous Irishmen serving with the Army, Navy or Air Force may re-enter Eire on leave, in civilian clothes.) Leading articles on the course of the war have to affect a cautious colourlessness—one may deplore no outrage and praise no victory. This does not, one is bound to admit, impair the dispassionate shrewdness of many comments: there have been times in Britain when one could have wished for a more dispassionate press. But the general effect is—the sense of a ban on *feeling*, in a country in which feeling naturally runs high. And, more serious, there is an inhibition of judgment that cannot be good for human development. No fact (with regard to Europe) is withheld, but facts are denied moral context. In the cinemas, the omission of all war scenes from the newsreels gives one the feeling of an invented world—one may watch social functions (not connected with war effort), trotting-races in the sunny Dominions, and one may still watch America drill, and the American warplanes take the sky. No film drama featuring or hingeing on the present war (or even, I understand, the 1914 war) may be shown. And, inevitably, *The Dictator* is not on view. Exception having been taken by the French and German Ministries to Mr. Lennox Robinson's dramatisation of *Boule de Suif*, the play was withdrawn from the Gate Theatre. As against this, English books on the war and on wartime political theory are available at bookshops and libraries, and English newspapers and periodicals can be obtained on order. *Picture Post* is in constant demand. Shortly, a watch is kept on anything that could be taken as propaganda. But, owing to the (still) common language, the British view of the war is represented, while the German, except in random talk, is not. On the whole, Eire's sequestration from Europe is (for her) the principal ill of her neutrality: it may go to create a national childishness, a lack of grasp on the general scheme of the world.

Compassionate feeling towards war victims there has been no attempt to check: this not only finds all but official expression, but has a number of outlets. The bombing of British civilians inspires horror and pity that are a good deal more than perfunctory. The Coventry raid, in particular, made a profound impression: one southern county raised, by subscription, a mobile canteen for Coventry. (It must be remembered that the name of Coventry has stood out in Eire since the I.R.A. bomb affair, and the executions that followed.) There is a wish, particularly in country places, to receive children from England—and this wish extends beyond the children already received—who have been, so far, limited to those of Irish connections or birth. The wish to house British children is more than purely compassionate; it embodies the hope for a future better relationship. "If the children grew up together," a countryman said, "the two countries might grow to be better friends."

Any German influence in Eire has, very largely, a cultural source. The Nazi encouragement of folk culture runs parallel to activities in Eire that date from the start of the Gaelic League, and the Nazi revivals of racial history and myth, the organisations of *Heimkunst* and song and dance are sometimes held up as model. Educationists wishing for progress on these lines are impressed. The cultivated middle-class Irish traveller has tended to overshoot Britain: one meets an impregnable ignorance of any advance in British social conditions. To many serious people of the new Eire, at odds with the fatalism of their own land, the Nazi briskness, race-culture and application of method showed (at least until recently) only its admirable side. Also, to the obstructed youth of Eire the idealisation of youth makes an appeal. (As against this, there is the temperamental dislike of regimentation in any form.) Again, the Nazi sweep-forward in the first year of the war had, for the imagination of an inactive country, Martian impressiveness—though against this stood the stigma of cruelty. I have met no one who entertained the idea that Eire could really profit from Axis victory—to most minds it seems clear that she would in the end suffer. Factions who might expect gain for Eire from a severe limitation of Britain's power do not seem to welcome the idea of the concomitant—extension of Axis power to the Irish shore.

Materially, neutral Eire in wartime is far from being the home of comfort and ease. Shortage and insecurity are felt everywhere. Any original fools' paradise is being rapidly broken up. The De Valera Government is not unrealistic with regard to home affairs; Mr. Lemass, Minister for Supplies, and Dr. Ryan, Minister of Agriculture, have issued a succession of biting home truths, directed at self-delusion in any form. Eire has been, and continues to be, warned: not only are luxuries out of the question, but she must look to herself only for her necessities. It is the last hard application of *Sinn Fein*. The situation is grave, and may become desperate if there is not a response in solid national effort. Outside the huge extension of compulsory tillage there is a drive for digging. The acute coal shortage has raised the slogan "Cut more turf"—but there is danger that one may strip the bogs. Lack of raw material for the industries threatens unemployment on an alarming scale. The cost of living goes up. Tea is to be closely rationed—and one has to know Eire to know how much this is felt. Butter is (in fact) short—owing to a severe drought in the summer and the reduction, for tillage, of grazing lands. The crowning threat to the country is the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease—the worst in this century. The stoppage of petrol, by emptying shopping towns, hits trade all round. Everywhere there is sombreness, and anxiety. But there is, with this, a growth of the sense of responsibility, an abandonment of the idea of privilege. Parish Councils work for co-operation, for emergency action, for mutual aid. Factions have come together, and national unity is more than a phrase. The Army shows, with regard to the size of the population, imposing figures. The size and zeal of the Local Security Force—whose junior group has been taken over for training by the Army command—shows a citizen readiness to defend the land. While the rights of Eire's neutrality may be questioned, the conviction behind it must be believed.

ELIZABETH BOWEN

SPEAKING TO THE FRENCH

IT seems to be generally accepted that our propaganda to foreign countries is clumsy and ineffective. My evidence may be of some interest, as I have just resigned, after nine months, from the Ministry of Information, where my chief work was maintaining liaison with the B.B.C. over our broadcasts in French. "How did you stand it so long?" some people have said to me, "What with the reactionary diplomatists at the Ministry and the Safety First Boys at Broadcasting House, the life must have been a nightmare!" Like the man who bites a dog (but unfortunately less unusual), incompetence in public bodies is "news," but competence is not; and I fear that some readers will therefore find my experiences disappointing. I should begin by stating that I know very little about our propaganda in any language except French: but certainly I found my colleagues and superiors in the Ministry energetic, intelligent, well informed and anything but Blimpish; while, on the other hand, the B.B.C. team with whom I worked were men and women conspicuous for their keenness, enterprise and intellectual agility. My resignation was caused not by discouragement or disagreement, but by ill-health. I do not pretend that I found the life of a Civil Servant as congenial as that of a journalist. Still less do I suggest that our broadcast propaganda in French could not be improved: such complacency would be most dangerous: and it must be obvious, for instance, to any regular listener that some of the French announcers are much less good than others. It stands to reason, moreover, that the division of functions between the Ministry and the B.B.C. must cause difficulties: theoretically the Ministry (under the ultimate control of

the Foreign Office, which provides a further complication) directs the policy, and the B.B.C. decides how this policy is to be translated into the technique of broadcasting. But in practice it is extremely difficult, in broadcasting as in the other arts, to delimit the frontier between form and content. To merge at any rate the foreign departments of the B.B.C. into the Ministry seems logical. Whether it would in fact be advantageous I greatly doubt; and though the present system entails inevitable misunderstandings and friction, these can with good will be reduced to a minimum.

Suggestions are always being made for the improvement of the Ministry—one critic wishes it to be staffed chiefly by journalists, another chiefly by advertising men. Admittedly administrators are not usually gifted for propaganda, but neither are propagandists for administration. (As a journalist, I found the Civil Servant part of my work intolerable, though there was not much of it.) Civil Servants—and the Service representatives—are not always alive to the importance of immediately commenting upon events, before enemy lies have time to spread; journalists, on the other hand, may be too eager to put out news before it is confirmed; and while a newspaper can make a mistake with impunity, the B.B.C. cannot afford this luxury. (But I believe that the journalists err much less often than the Service representatives.) On the other hand, I vehemently disagree with the notion, very ably expounded by Mr. Peter Cromwell in *Horizon*, that spreading opinions and beliefs is an activity comparable with selling cosmetics and laxatives. The French Section at the Ministry of Information does in fact receive valuable advice from an advertising expert as well as from a psychologist. But most of the advertising for which experts are responsible is based on fear, or on snobbery which is a form of fear: and, in our propaganda to the occupied and friendly countries, fear is usually the last emotion that we want to excite. Moreover, for our foreign propaganda a wide experience is necessary of the political and social background of the people we are addressing. I agree, however, that there ought to be probably more advertising men and certainly more journalists in the Ministry.

German propaganda is often put forward as a model that we should imitate. It was part of my work to study what the Germans were saying to the French, and I do not think that they are nearly so skilful as they are supposed to be. Certainly the Nazis have been successful in their home propaganda—but do we wish to feed either our compatriots or friendly peoples with lies and excite them to hysteria? (Mr. Harold Nicolson states the case against this very trenchantly in this year's *B.B.C. Handbook*.) I am convinced that we are wise in making scrupulous truthfulness the first requisite. There has been no greater blunder in our propaganda than the optimism of our comments during the Norwegian campaign—and these were not intentionally misleading. Certainly the Germans were skilful also in their broadcasts to France during the Maginot months; and critics of our propaganda often say: "Why not take a lesson from Dr. Goebbels, and vary our war-aims according to the particular sections of French opinion? Why not tell the Left that we are fighting for Socialism, and abuse the *bourgeoisie*? Why not tell the Right that we are fighting for private property, and abuse the proletariat? Why worry about consistency?" To this common and, I think, most thoughtless suggestion, the answer is obvious. The Germans were aiming, only too successfully, at the disintegration of an enemy; our purpose is the reintegration of a friend. There are in fact French programmes directed at particular sections of the community, talks to the Trade Unionists, for instance, every morning, addresses to Catholics on Sundays, talks to women, Youth, doctors, schoolmasters. But it is clear, I suggest, that the object of such talks should be to build up a common front against the common enemy, to emphasise not what divides Frenchmen but what unites them. France was defeated largely by a lack of solidarity: a mutual hatred, not only between workmen and employers but between the country and the towns, blinded all sections to the menace at the frontier. The future of the French depends upon their ability to unite.

Our chief handicap in propaganda has been the shortage of transmitters. None of our previous governments realised in any way the importance of wireless as the Fourth Arm (I do not know if the Treasury even now is fully awake to this). Incredible as it may seem, there is nowhere in our African Empire a station that can be heard all over that continent. England is also ill-placed in Europe geographically in comparison with Germany, the central position of which is a vast advantage for the use of the medium waves, with their comparatively short range. The Germans, moreover, have now the use of transmitters in the seven countries they have occupied. Their output is therefore distressingly larger than ours; and they have also a number of transmitters available for jamming the wavelengths that we use. In spite of this there is a most satisfactory accumulation of evidence that many more Frenchmen listen to us than to the Germans. We broadcast simultaneously on a number of lengths, on one at least of which reception is usually possible, and advice is frequently given upon the construction of aerials to diminish the effects of jamming. Moreover, we are broadcasting in French not only from this country but from Cairo, Jerusalem, Aden, Mauritius, Bathurst, Accra, Singapore, Hong Kong, Melbourne, Fiji and British Guiana. A powerful station in the Belgian Congo not only broadcasts independently for the Belgian Government, but relays the B.B.C. French news; and there are Free French stations in the Near East, in Equatorial Africa and in the Cameroons, one of which, Brazzaville, is powerful enough for its excellent output to be received in this country.

Since we are still short of transmitters, and are broadcasting in more than thirty languages, the suggestion often made that we should have an uninterrupted service all day in French is at present unpractical. The output however has been considerably increased, and there are at present eight French news-bulletins daily, each occupying a quarter of an hour and including sometimes a short talk as well as the news. In addition there is an hour and three quarters of French programme, spread through the day in three periods of 15 minutes and two of 30 minutes. Twice daily there is a period for which General de Gaulle's *Forces Françaises Libres* are responsible: the General himself is a remarkable orator, and the officer in charge of the broadcasts also speaks frequently with a fire that commands attention and deep respect. The Free French broadcast often includes messages to their families from men recently arrived to fight at our side.

News is what the French are most anxious for; the newspapers and wireless stations of occupied France are, of course, under direct German control; in the Vichy zone also the wireless stations are to a deplorable extent at the orders of the invader, and the press, though more independent, is rigorously censored and forbidden to show sympathy with us. Only between the lines can journalists who wish us well express their feelings. The French are thoroughly aware of this, and depend upon the B.B.C. for their news, which listeners hand on by word of mouth to those who have not adequate sets. (Fortunately there are a large number of short-wave sets in France, for medium waves can in daytime be received only in the Northern provinces.) To satisfy this appetite for information a lot of time is given even in the "programme" periods to the presentation in various forms of the latest news: there are several "news commentaries" every day, which correspond to the leaders and "leaderettes" in newspapers. (The B.B.C. is fortunate in having two brilliant journalists for these, M. Pierre Bourdan and M. Jean Marin.) Then there are five or six talks daily, most of which are topical. Particularly trenchant and lucid are those dealing with economic subjects, such as the blockade, the disguised inflation, and the systematic looting of France by means of German paper money. The standard of the French talks is, in my opinion, much higher than that prevailing in our Home programmes, although the speakers had to be found among the comparatively small number of Frenchmen available in this country. Of course, the public is more politically minded in France than it is here; and that these news commentaries and talks find a large and eager audience is proved by a constant stream of letters. There are occasional talks by Englishmen and French Canadians as well as by Americans and citizens of other friendly countries. But the British point of view is expressed mainly in the news-bulletins.

Lastly, there are the slogans and "features," which are the most distinctive part of our propaganda in French. A group of Frenchmen produce a programme from 8.30 to 9 every evening, called "Les Français parlent aux Français." The director of this group, M. Jacques Duchesne, usually begins with a few "Réflexions," which show the soundest qualities of the French brain and heart. Indeed the first merit of these programmes is their Frenchness. Those responsible are obviously not mere mouthpieces for the British Government; nor are they under the control of General de Gaulle, though they, of course, wholeheartedly support his movement and co-operate happily with his Headquarters. This independence adds enormously to the effect of their work, and to destroy it would, in my opinion, be a catastrophic error. The other great merit of "Les Français parlent aux Français" is that it is first-rate entertainment. The word "propaganda" has a depressing sound, because we associate it not only with dishonesty but with boredom. If the first essential of the propagandist is to be truthful, the second is to be lively. (And by liveliness I mean not only trenchancy in satire and vividness in reporting but the telling qualities in pathos and encouragement.) In this respect I believe the French programme to be un-

surpassed. Whatever may be said against France—and much that is said betrays prejudice or ignorance—the French remain the most intelligent and articulate of peoples. They express ideas and emotions with extraordinary art: there is something indeed in common between Poussin and René Clair, between Voltaire arguing and the old peasant arranging on a market stall her vegetables and cheeses. Skill in propaganda is likely therefore to be found in a painter, a cinema director or a theatrical producer, if he is French, no less than in an advertising man or a journalist.

The slogans devised by the French group of whom I have been speaking consist of topical words, usually set to popular tunes—either modern music-hall songs or traditional airs. These are continually varied and altered. There is, for instance, a song to the tune of *La Mère Michel* about Mussolini that has had a new verse to celebrate each of his reverses. (It is now growing delightfully long.) The words "Radio-Paris ment, Radio-Paris est allemand," set to a popular air, *La Cucuracha*, has swept France; and on one occasion in a school, when a pupil said she had heard some item of news from the Paris wireless station, all the rest of the class began to hum this tune, and then to sing the words. The "features" include reportages in factories, shelters, Free French ships, etc.: dramatised versions of stories such as Daudet's and Maupassant's tales of 1870: accounts of resistance in other occupied countries: descriptions of the help being received from the Empire and the United States; biographies of great Frenchmen, evocations of particular French provinces and similar appeals to national pride. Most popular of all are "la Petite Academie" every Sunday evening, and the "Discussions des Trois Amis" every Thursday. The former is a parody of proceedings at the French Academy, with definitions of words, with puns and wise-cracks running riot. (One definition I remember was that of *scaphandrier*—a deep sea diver—after Taranto, "Inspecteur de la marine italienne.") The Trois Amis are at least equally entertaining, and I strongly recommend all readers who know French to tune in one Thursday at 8.30 p.m. (373 metres is probably the best wavelength to try). After the usual slogans and talks they will hear three Frenchmen arguing with a vivacity and spontaneity utterly unlike anything ever heard, so far as I know, in English wireless discussions. Close your eyes, and you might be in the chief *café* of any French town. The effect, at least upon myself, is to provoke not only amusement but the sadness of nostalgia.

I recently read an article on "What to Say to France," much of which was perfectly sensible, but the author showed no signs of ever having listened to what we do say, so that the advice was not so helpful as it might have been. It was similarly my experience at the Ministry that most, though not all, of those in England who sent criticisms of our propaganda to the French suggested either what was already being done or what materially could not be done. But the letters received by the B.B.C., some sent openly from listeners in unoccupied France, others clandestinely from the other zone, are a great help in gauging the effectiveness of the various types of broadcast as well as a perpetual source of encouragement. Letters also come from the French overseas possessions; and one problem which I have not now space to consider is that the tastes and needs of listeners in the French Empire are rather different from those prevailing in metropolitan France.

From the day of the capitulation the success of our French propaganda has continued to increase, despite such stumbling-blocks as the Oran incident and the blockade. (It has been a principle to discuss very frankly all such obstacles to Anglo-French understanding as well as to admit our past mistakes.) There is more good feeling to-day towards this country than there has ever been in history. I do not know whether it will be possible further to strengthen or even to maintain this good feeling not only against the efforts of the Germans and of those Frenchmen who have from cowardice, vanity, ignorance or avarice espoused the policy of collaboration, but also against the demoralisation that may come from hunger. But of one thing I am confident: whatever enterprise, ingenuity and sincerity can achieve will in fact be achieved, so long as our broadcasts to France continue to be handled by the French and British men and women at the B.B.C. who are at present in charge of them. RAYMOND MORTIMER

HOLIDAY

THERE is to be a shortage of holidays as of bananas this year. The most holiday-making generation that the world has yet known is now told that it must work even on Good Friday, and Civil Servants are asked to be content with a week's holiday in the year. Yet only a few years ago every one agreed on the importance of leisure, and social philosophers, fearing that too much leisure too suddenly allotted to us might not be good for us, were discussing the problem of leisure as a problem that would have to be tackled seriously in the fairly near future. Man, they argued, has not yet been educated up to the proper digestion of all the holidays with which labour-saving and cornucopian machinery would soon be providing him. Even Conservative prophets charmed or alarmed us with a vision of a world in which no one would have to work more than about four hours a day on three days a week. It looked as though nothing could save our grandchildren from becoming lotus-eaters except a catastrophic breakdown in the progress of mechanical invention.

I have heard a brilliant pessimist foretelling such a breakdown. He believed in the possibility that over large areas of the world the horse-plough would take the place of the tractor, and that, later on, man would revert from the horse-plough to the spade. Thus civilisation, or the remnants of it, would return to the ancient days of incessant toil and man, losing his mastery of nature, would become more and more its slave. No need in such a world to discuss the problem of leisure. The problem would not arise. Holidays would disappear.

Though not believing that continuous progress is inevitable, I cannot take these gloomy prognostications seriously. I do not think that, unless the more civilised races are wiped out by a plague more devastating than any yet recorded, science and its inventions can disappear from the earth and man become once more a machineless barbarian. I have no doubt that man, having acquired an appetite for more and more holidays, will rouse himself to unparalleled efforts to preserve and improve the machinery that alone makes more and more of them possible for everybody.

It is true that some of the older generation are not enthusiastic about the holiday-making world to which we had till recently become accustomed. I have heard them in the country recalling with pride the time when there was not even a Saturday half-holiday on the farms. "These young fellows," they would say, as they watched the new generation playing cricket on the village green on Saturday afternoon, "don't know what work is. We used to have to work Saturdays the same as other days, and our only chance to play cricket was on Sunday. Now it's all holidays and motor-buses and cinemas. When we were young, we had to work." Certainly, if they did, they looked as if they had thrived on it. I sometimes wondered, as I listened to them, whether after all holidays were so necessary as I had always taken for granted.

One thing that strikes me as absurd about the holiday system is that we get most holidays at a time when we need them least. At school we had not only two months of holiday in summer, but ten days or so at Christmas and another ten days or so at Easter. If it had been a boarding-school, this would have been reasonable enough, since it is good for most children occasionally to see their parents; but for a hive of lazy little day-boys to be given these long spells of leisure, as though it were the only way to save them from mental breakdown, was to my mind ridiculous, even if productive of much pleasure. Now that I am past the school age I am in favour of making the length of a holiday proportionate to the number of years a human being has lived. Let the schoolboy be cut down to a month and let six months be the quota of the man of sixty.

Yet who would have the heart to put this into practice? There is an extreme pleasure in mere abstinence from work that is known only to the schoolboy. One may be perfectly happy at school—most of the schoolboys I knew seemed quite happy—yet a rainbow arches the day on which one need not go to it. It may be that the boy instinctively knows that school is merely a means of inveigling him into the net of work in which he is doomed to pass most of the rest of his days. School may be enjoyable, but he is aware in his sub-consciousness that there is a catch in it. Hence, his rebellious craving for holidays. He will even pretend to be ill in order to be able to stay at home and secure a day's freedom. A friend of mine—a free spirit, if ever there was one—used often to stay away without even a pretence of being ill and would turn up the next day with a letter of excuse which he had written himself and which had signed cleverly with his father's name. This shows to what lengths the more daring young will go in order to avoid the first steps that lead to the full inheritance of Adam's curse.

Not that the pleasures of holidays in our early years are mainly negative. No summer day is long enough to contain all the pleasures that a boy at the seaside is capable of enjoying. The very air smells differently from the air through which he recently hastened to school. To walk in such air, on such sands, in such attire is to have a foretaste of the golden streets. To feel salt water on the body and to sit on a rock and watch the pick of the human race diving from heights

so cleanly, so masterfully, and to see them swimming with a variety of strokes that no fish ever knew—these are but a piece of a day at the end of which a boy, if he were a Roman poet, might well write "Vixi." Through the course of the day, from the unloading of a coal-boat in the harbour to a bottle of lemonade drunk in a confectioner's shop, all experience is gilded. . . .

For Christmas holidays, apart from Christmas Day, there was no comparable justification. They were good, because it is good to be young and idle, but there was no rapture about them. They were merely like a series of Saturdays, on which walking and talking were the main occupations of life. Even Easter I spent in town, but it was better than Christmas. Christmas is a holiday on which human beings creep into their houses. Easter is a season in which they pour out of their houses in a Derby Day mood into the open air. How pleasant it was to wander among the stalls laden with the sweet known as yellow man and uneatable-looking cakes decorated with sugar-coated caraway seeds of all colours, as one waited for the balloon to go up—a real balloon incomparably more wonderful than the penny balloons in the hawkers' nets that on ordinary days seemed wonderful enough! And, great moment of the day, when the balloon had waned to the size of an orange in the sky, the aeronaut flung himself from the basket and returned slowly to earth with a parachute in his fist. Luckily, the little watching victim did not forsee that a parachute would one day become something more than an item in an Easter Monday entertainment. And so he held his breath, at once exhilarated and terrified at sight of so perilous a deed, as we used to feel when we saw Blondin at the height of a high roof walking the tight-rope blindfold in days when there was no net below to catch him if he fell.

Good as these holidays were, however, I am not sure that they were necessary. Ordinary life is so full of holidays that these special holidays seem to me to be superfluous. A holiday is merely a break in routine, and these breaks occur for all of us several times a day. At school there was a break at the end of every class, as we shifted ourselves from the classical department to the English and from the English to the mathematical. There was a recess at half-past twelve in which the young raced, like hungry poultry, to the tuck-shop and bought buns—such buns, sugar-decked, indigestible, and therefore good! Even when we have grown up, every meal gives us a break of this kind and how cunningly the modern man has increased the number of his daily breaks! To his real meals and his afternoon tea he has in recent years added morning coffee, and I have no doubt that, if the world had continued to move along the grooves of peace, he would have found an excuse for a snippet or munchet that would have given him a respite from work at the end of every hour. Men—especially business men—are natural idlers. The tired business man is a myth, invented to conceal from the ordinary City worker the fact that he spends far too much of his day eating, drinking, talking and sleeping. How indolent he is is shown by the fact that he is unwilling to make a slight effort with his brains even in the theatre. I have heard him described as bone-lazy. Obviously the adjective is inapplicable to the creative business man who as a rule works as hard as a journalist—perhaps, even harder. But business men on the whole seem to me to have an easy time of it and, in their skill in avoiding work, to be an example to us all.

They have certainly shown us how to obtain those breaks which are the essential constituents of a holiday and which we may well learn to regard as holidays in these holidayless times. After all, the chief function of a holiday is to give us something to look forward to and so keep the lamp of hope burning, and, if we think of our life as a procession of lunches and teas and homegoings in the evenings we shall—or may—realise that in a world so packed with minute holidays to look forward to, the old-fashioned holidays are unnecessary. Anyhow, we may as well tell ourselves an agreeable lie of some kind or other, for we are going to have no long holiday this year. Y. Y.

VIRGINIA WOOLF

VIRGINIA WOOLF has gone. Those who knew her will never again be entertained and fascinated in the same way. The talk so wild but always to the point . . . the curious little crow of amusement before she laughed . . . the richness of her appreciation of character. . . . Her mind had the same sweeping movements as her limbs. There were bursts of almost jovial humour, sudden flashes of uneasiness and suspicion lest one might be criticising or laughing at her, sudden warmth and affection all in swift succession. She liked to personify people as animals. She herself had the changing, easily startled moods of a thoroughbred racehorse. She was aristocratic in appearance but unconscious and unaware of her own dignity.

She was beautiful with a beauty that gave the lie to Shakespeare's lament in so many of the sonnets.

> When forty winters shall besiege thy brow
> And dig deep trenches in thy beauties field,
> Thy youth's proud livery so gazed on now
> Will be a tattered weed of small worth held. . . .

Virginia Woolf was fifty-nine, but the signs of that siege, the presence of those trenches, did not subtract from her beauty. The hollow temples, hollow eyes, and almost fleshless face were as lovely as the unearthly beauty she had as a girl in her twenties when I first remember her.

Dogmatising about the sexes is foolish. I only do it here because it may explain a quality in Virginia Woolf's work. For she made what men consider a weakness in women's minds, her strength. Her originality as a writer was largely in expressing it. Women, it is said, do not concentrate. They can attend to the subject in hand but their attention has not the wholeheartedness of man's. If so, it is just possible that since women have been cooking the supper, mending clothes, listening to half a dozen children talking at once and keeping them amused since before the dawn of history, they may have learned to be able to attend to several things at a time. Man, on the other hand, focuses his mind. A watch has stopped let us say. Time and space and his environment cease to exist for him when he begins taking it to pieces and analysing possible reasons for what is wrong.

In art and literature men do the same. They concentrate on one point after another and the result is a series of events logically related together. Almost all women writers have imitated men more or less successfully in this. But Virginia Woolf's work resembles that of the woman who is mending clothes in the kitchen while she watches the pots simmering on the stove and is telling a story to the children round her knee without forgetting that there is a home-made cake in the oven which, judging by the smell, will soon be ready to come out.

In other words time, space, and the environment never cease to exist. Her chief interest is in relative motion.

> But there was no silence; all the time the motor omnibuses were turning their wheels and changing their gear; like a vast nest of Chinese boxes all wrought steel turning ceaselessly one within another the city murmured; on the top of which the voices cried aloud and all the petals of myriads of flowers flashed their colours into the air.

That last sentence of the little sketch *Kew Gardens*, written at the end of the last war, illustrates a pre-occupation of Virginia Woolf's mind. All her novels show the same absorbed interest in simultaneous relative motions, which are independent of each other. It was by means of that awareness that she told her stories and showed the reader her characters. Jacob, in *Jacob's Room*, is shown to us as a young man, through the eyes of old Mrs. Norman protesting feebly as he enters the railway compartment: "This is not a smoking carriage," and imagining that she would throw her scent bottle with her right hand and tug the communication cord with her left if he assaulted her.

> She was fifty years of age and had a son at college. Nevertheless it is a fact that men are dangerous.

She sees his face and is reassured. We see Jacob through her eyes as she travels to Cambridge. Then as she gets out:

> this sight of her fellow-traveller was completely lost in her mind, as the crooked pin dropped by a child into the wishing well twirls in the water and disappears for ever.

That image is an illustration of Virginia Woolf's other most remarkable quality as a writer. The prose is like poetry, the language as sensitive to the beauty of things as the mind of the writer is to the multiplicity of events. The dispersion of attention which might have become a trick is never so in her. It is never a formula but the expression of individual taste and as carefully chosen, as inevitable, as her taste in words. But the dispersion which is so perfectly controlled in *Jacob's Room*, *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* became more difficult in *The Waves* and *The Years*. She has left a completed novel which has been announced by the Hogarth Press.

There was another side to her as a writer. Virginia Woolf was not the daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen for nothing. Not only did she assume that the object of life was to write good books, not only was she bookish, but she was a scholar. Her critical work and her recent biography of Roger Fry reveal the balanced orderly powers of her mind. She could at any time write a biographical sketch, or an article in a newspaper, marshalling her facts and delivering her judgments with ease, scholarship and wit.

But in her novels and sketches the originality of her approach, her command of language and of all the associations which echo in words and can be called out from them like the murmur of the waves evoked for us by the shell clasped to our ear, make Virginia Woolf one of the few great women writers and perhaps the most original and least like a man of them all.

DAVID GARNETT

THE MOVIES

"Major Barbara," at the Odeon.
"The Ramparts We Watch," at the Gaumont.

It's absurd, of course, but if Hollywood insists on filming Shakespeare, why should we lag behind with Shaw? The silent days, when *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar* and even *Hamlet* struggled on to celluloid, were inimical to *Candida* and *Man and Superman*. In *Hamlet*, so far as I remember, it was the ghost story, in *Macbeth* the advance on the Dunsinane sector, that were made to grip audiences. Shakespeare's silence on the screen was poignant, but nothing to what Mr. Shaw's would have been. Imagine Jack Tanner with gestures helped out by an occasional caption, Caesar silently confronting the sphinx; almost any Shaw character in the circumstances would be reduced to a Harpo. Does that impossibility remain? Perhaps, for every good film contains still a silent film at heart. Despite some brilliant qualities we rarely forget that *Major Barbara* was written for a room with three walls, or that in converting it to the screen—everything, as Cusins says, is converted here—the director, Gabriel Pascal, has had to make drastic cuts in Mr. Shaw's argument. One character, Undershaft the munitions millionaire, has gone oddly astray. Pascal (and possibly even Shaw himself at this date?) has surrendered to a latent charm in the big businessman, and instead of the drastic, amoral, and terrifyingly detached and playful figure of the text, we are asked to believe in Mr. Robert Morley, gay and magnetic in the part. He uses his eyes like a conjurer, but in bringing off the trick he sadly bewilders us. All the harder sayings about his death-dealing, his impartial advocacy of war and delight in a new explosive that is being tried on the Chinese, have been cut; and the profession of faith of an Armourer would seem, in the atmosphere of the present, to have entered on a new phase of respectability. More highminded and less disruptive than he was, Undershaft ceases to be the central figure; the audience applauds his remarks about politicians, but isn't given the chance of judging him by his philosophy of freedom backed by machine-guns; and when, at the end, Barbara and Cusins submit themselves, we have to guess what exactly it is they are taking on.

Instead of one hero, Undershaft, there are now several leading strings. Barbara (Wendy Hiller) begins delightfully at an open-air meeting by getting her professor of Greek (Rex Harrison) to put up his hand and follow her indoors for conversion; and through all the Salvation Army scenes she combines a sensible charm with sweetness and light. But where is the conquering energy? We have to wait for Dame Sybil Thorndike's General addressing a rally at the Albert Hall for that. Barbara's religion appears to us only through Cusins' eyes, as an adjunct to her charm, and when she doffs uniform, it is to wander through streets at night and drop her bonnet into the river—a most un-Shavian passage of reverie. She is even taken home in an ambulance. After that, no longer Major, she rather disappears from view. Mr. Rex Harrison makes a much sharper impression, if once we accept him in an intellectual role; horn-rimmed spectacles, cunningly put on and off, do their best to convince us. And Mr. Harrison bangs the big drum with a will, and later shows a gusto in his relations with Undershaft which keeps him well in the picture till the end. One other character gains in importance in the film: Bill Walker, the uneasy bully in search of his girl at the hostel, not only wins that scene with his repeated "What price salvation now?", but obviously attracted the director as an inspired outsider, as it were, to the run of the plot. Mr. Robert Newton gives a splendid performance in the part, and the best of the new scenes written in to the film is Bill Walker going off to the meeting at Tower Hill to get the sock on the jaw which he feels he owes to Providence. The last shot of the film shows him, well washed and beaming, in the stream of Undershaft's employés.

Bill Walker is a case in which the more dispersed interest of film technique succeeds. Otherwise, Pascal gives us elegant and vast sitting rooms, some pleasantly photographed bits of East End, the Albert Hall rally, and, of course, views in the Russian manner of the munition-city. (The views hardly make up for arguments not taken over from the play.) Great care has obviously been taken with detail, and even the smaller parts—Mr. Emlyn Williams as Snobby Price, and Miss Carr as Jenny Hill—are well played. Despite the faults of casting and cutting already mentioned, which rather make hay of the play's last Act, *Major Barbara* is still first-rate entertainment. Shaw's ebullience seems to provide an unslackening fount of energy; and though one misses some of the verbal cadenzas, his people are outspoken as no one else is in films except the Marx Brothers. Wit, too, for once takes the place of wise-cracking. Whatever one may say against it, *Major Barbara* is unquestionably fun.

The Ramparts We Watch is the first full-length "March of Time." As a prelude to preparedness in 1941 it shows us the slow stir of American opinion during the last war. The highlights of the film are the shots from newsreels of the last war, and the abridged Baptism of Fire, which shows once more the skill of the Nazi war-films quite apart from propaganda. There are two shots here, one of dive-bombing and the other of infantry crouching beside a tank as it creeps through defended streets which brings a stab of realism missing from some of our own newsreels of war. The material of *The Ramparts We Watch* has been brilliantly put together with the help of actors from a small town who represent most convincingly the graph of "average American" opinion.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

THE COMING WEEK

SATURDAY, April 12th—
Opening of Shakespeare Festival with "Much Ado About Nothing," Stratford-on-Avon.
"Close Quarters," St. Martin's.

TUESDAY, April 15th—
Mrs. Flora Stephenson: "Community Centres," Housing Centre, 13 Suffolk Street, S.W.1, 1.
Edward Carter: "Britain To-day—Architecture," Morley College, 6.30.

THURSDAY, April 17th—
Recital of Classical Music by Sela Trau and Paul Audré, St. George's Church, Bloomsbury 6.
A. G. Lewis: "Modern English Sociology," Free German League of Culture, 36 Upper Park Road, N.W.3, 5.30.

FRIDAY, April 18th—
N. B. L. Pevsner: "Early English Cathredals, 1175-1250," Birkbeck College, 5.
A speaker from the Youth Relief and Refugee Council on "The English Youth Movement and Its History," 36 Upper Park Road, N.W.3, 5.15.

Correspondence

ART AND THE AVERAGE MAN

SIR,—Mr. Raymond Mortimer's succinct and sensible article dealt faithfully with highbrow-hunting and passed on to the aesthetic appetite of the average man. This is a theme on which anybody can theorise gallantly, thinking, as a rule, very much according to his wishes. Facts and figures are rarely given in this debate, although Mr. Geoffrey Faber has elsewhere been able to show that the height of brow in up-to-date poetry is compatible with pleasantly high sales.

During the past I have been assisting, through C.E.M.A., in the conveyance to the average man, especially outside the large cities, of aesthetic opportunities hitherto scanty or absent. May I contribute a few facts which may be of use if the theorising is to proceed to any profit?

First, with regard to the graphic arts—Mr. Mortimer, when he says "the inhabitants of many English towns are for the first time being given an opportunity of seeing a good painting and the results are highly gratifying," is referring, I presume, to the Travelling Exhibitions organised by C.E.M.A. with the British Institute of Adult Education. (If so, he should have added Scottish and Welsh to English.) His estimate of the results is supported by the figures. Over eighty exhibitions (of old and new masters, War Paintings, industrial design, and now of architecture and town-planning) were given during 1940 in a wide variety of towns from Aberdeen to Neath. Over a quarter of a million people attended them. The guide-lecturers report keen, critical interest. The Forces have been big attenders. Many more Exhibitions are being planned for the coming year.

Music. Mr. Mortimer specifically mentions Mozart as not appealing to "the average man." Yet a Vic-Wells autumn tour of Lancashire towns with two operas (*Figaro* one of them) in pocket-size productions was so popular that it never drew upon its guarantor. The price of seats had, of course, to be kept low.

Factory concerts of serious music are in great demand and the Welfare Officers of the Ministry of Labour are frequently appealing to C.E.M.A. for more. At a Town Hall orchestral concert in Erith, surely an average S.E. England industrial district, a vote was taken as to public demands for the future. Here is the voting, Light Orchestral with soloist (33.9 per cent.), Orchestral (26.6), Choral and Orchestral (26.2), Variety (9.2), Band (4.1).

Drama. In C.E.M.A. tours Tragedy seems to be more popular than Comedy. *Macbeth* played to bigger money at Burnley than any other of the "Old Vic" plays, including *Twelfth Night* and *She Stoops to Conquer*. The Pilgrim Players find an ever-ready public for *Murder in the Cathedral*. Dame Sybil Casson and Mr. Lewis Casson touring *Macbeth* in the mining towns and all over Wales played everywhere to crowded and most enthusiastic audiences. This tribute has just reached us from Blaenau-Festiniog. "The performances of the 'Old Vic' Co. were a huge success. I can guarantee that the great bulk of audiences were composed of working folk. I have no hesitation in stating, after conferring with my friends, that the hall would be full every night for a week."

Such facts obviously need interpretation. Public support depends largely on good projection of the art in question. The personnel of the interpreters is another point affecting results. The cinema has put the public in love with "names" and that, as well as a fine production, may have helped *Macbeth* to its great favour. At the same time, it seems fair to derive somewhat optimistic conclusions. The average attender on the kind of art that C.E.M.A. is helping to diffuse or nationalise may not be wholly "average citizen." Perhaps he or she might be called "average plus." But there are plainly a great many such people who, doing average jobs in average places, are delighted to take the opportunity of getting non-average entertainment. C.E.M.A. artists, whether travelling musicians or players or exhibitors of painting, never feel themselves to be forcing their goods on the unwilling and have countless invitations to return. Incidentally, the new and wide experience of different audiences is welcomed by many artists.

It is probably true, as Mr. Mortimer observes, that the more privileged classes, who have had Public School and University education, remain average Philistines. It is entirely true that the best arbiter of finesse in any craft or calling is in some sort a specialist. But the judgment of the "average plus" thousands on general artistic effects seems to be valuable and sound.

In any case the "average plus" people appear to be sufficiently informed, interested, appreciative and numerous to justify C.E.M.A.'s policy of taking "the best to the most." "The best," in this case, is roughly decided by Mr. Mortimer's own standard of an agreement of educated taste over a number of years. In the case of the quite modern work that criterion must, of course, be supplanted by more immediate valuation.

C.E.M.A., Alexandra House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2. IVOR BROWN

A GENERAL ELECTION

SIR,—Mr. Wilson Midgley's scheme for the restoration of democracy on the instalment system raises some interesting points but fails, I feel, to take any sort of real account of the actual reasons why both a General Election and the equally important local government elections are not being contemplated at present.

The main reason is, surely, that the people in charge of the national machinery of the three main political parties have set their faces sternly against any kind of electoral contest during the war period. In parliamentary by-elections the political truce operates to provide a walk-over for the nominee of the Party which is supposed to "own" the seat (who said the days of the pocket borough were over?) unless the Communists or some other purveyors of nuisance value decide to utilise the occasion to present the Exchequer with £150. In municipal by-elections even this remnant of democratic procedure has vanished and local Councils now fill vacancies in their number by "co-opting" a member of the same political party as the retiring or deceased Councillor. One Town Council has now succeeded in "co-opting" back all the Conservatives who were defeated in the elections prior to the war. A County Council has gone one better and "co-opted" an ex-member of the British Union of Fascists, who has thus been placed in a position of responsibility in connection with civil defence.

The principle that seats on either a local Council or in Parliament can be regarded, even in a war emergency, as the exclusive property of the political party which happened to win them at the last elections is a monstrous negation both of democratic principles and of constitutional usage. The Labour Party, of all parties, should be the first to repudiate this elevation of the caucus principle to the exclusion of everything that we mean by the word "democracy."

J. STEWART COOK.

Crossways, Osborne Road,
Windsor, Berks.

EDUCATION IN THE ARMY

SIR,—Since last September I have been lecturing on an average twice a week to units of H.M. Forces stationed in this area.

I have spoken without any let or hindrance. The discussion afterwards has been free and furious. All ranks have attended the lectures and joined in the discussion. My conclusions after six months of Army Education are these:

(i) There is a clear line of distinction between those over 40 and those under 40. The over 40's for the most part look on this war as one between England and Germany, which is for them one of many wars that have been fought in the past, and one which will possibly recur in the future.

The under 40's on the whole think of it more as a European civil war; that we should direct our propaganda and our efforts to securing the collaboration of elements within Germany antagonistic to Nazism, and by establishing a European police force prevent it recurring in 20 years' time.

(ii) The officers are mainly interested in questions of military strategy and policy, the other ranks are mainly interested in general social problems, especially of reconstruction after the war.

After a course of 18 lectures at one unit I asked them to send in questions which could be discussed at a general meeting at the end of the course. These are some of the questions I received:

The Major asked:

"What would be the effect on the R.C. population of the world (more especially Spain, France and Ireland) if the R.A.F. bombed Rome à la Coventry?"

The Captain asked:

"Are the armament factories of France working at full capacity for Hitler? If so, do you consider we should blitz these? What repercussion would this have on (a) Vichy France, (b) Free France."

The Lieutenant asked:

"We are reading repeatedly in the press—bomb German cities in the same manner as they have ours, strike at the German population in this way and their morale will crack. Do you consider this as quick a way of ending the war than by the rather slow method of breaking their morale by the type of propaganda suggested in your last lecture? Should we not for instance concentrate on military objectives as we are, and occasionally blitz a German city (say Munich) in the same way as Coventry was blitzed?"

An N.C.O. asked:

"In what way will the country try to solve the Unemployment Problem after the war?"

A Private asked:

"What in your opinion should be the first reform undertaken at the end of this war?"

And another Private asked:

"Where private ownership interferes with the welfare of the majority you have suggested public ownership. Do you mean "Municipal Ownership,' 'State Ownership' or 'Co-operative Ownership' of the people directly concerned?"

These questions are a fair sample and indicate that no restriction is put on the men (at least in this area) from expressing and discussing their problems frankly.

H. MORRIS-JONES

University College,
Nottingham.

SIR,—When I enrolled in the A.T.S., a few days after the declaration of war, I was actuated by hatred of the Nazi Government and the desire to share the responsibilities of my generation. I was aware that, in the King's service, I was there to obey and not to question and that it was my duty to be "above" politics. I was not aware, however, nor do I think many ordinary, everyday citizens like myself are aware, that attendance is being made compulsory, and that no opportunity for questions or discussion is being offered at political lectures, and at such a one, in fact, as I attended a short while ago, which set out to discredit utterly what one may term liberal thought, and which, without malice, may be said to have been a deliberate attempt to foster "khaki conservatism."

At the lecture I attended, the speaker, an Army man and a Conservative M.P., prefaced his talk by saying that his opinions were personal ones and that his outlook was strictly non-party. He begged us to be charitable to all politicians, "who were doing their best." He then voiced the personal opinion that politics after the war would be non-party. He next proceeded to state categorically that the German race had been a brutish and militant one, with no pretentions to any culture, from times immemorial. He quoted Julius Caesar and the troublesome tribes on the Rhine. To anyone, with even an elementary knowledge of history, it is obvious that those peoples bear little ethnological affinity to the present German race. In the next sentence he leaped over the centuries to the extremely complex problem of the rise of Prussianism in modern times and again breathed over it the catchword "race."

He then attempted to explain the causes of this war. He stated that some people went back to Manchuria. He preferred to explain it by the disarmament programme in this country, which would have made intervention ineffectual. This arose, he thought, our of "the rot started by the Labour Government when it was in power," out of the pacifist influence in this country, the League of Nations and "its long-haired men and short-haired women," and the Peace Ballot, the questions of which were cast in the form, "Do you beat your wife? Yes or No? If yes, all right. If no, why don't you?" These cheap gibes were followed by the irresponsible statement that America could be counted out in the present conflict because she always preferred to watch the first nine rounds and come in on the tenth.

Poland had not been worth fighting for. Czechoslovakia, by some analogy which escaped me, was like "the youth who wanted to prove himself a man by going wrong with wine and women." And finally, the speaker was glad that we had lost many of our allies because they deserved nothing better than to fall beneath the thraldom of Germany. Racial hatred, militarism, insularism.

VOLUNTEER

THE PROBLEM OF GERMANY

SIR,—May I congratulate you on the courageous and admirable article, "The Problem of Germany," in the last issue of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. Every word you said is right, and I only want to underline the importance of your statement by adding a few remarks. The Editor of the *Nineteenth Century* proposes to destroy the German war machine and to disarm Germany after the war, while Great Britain and the other democratic countries should remain in arms. Only in this way Mr. Voigt sees a guarantee to spare the world from a third world war. The Editor of the *Nineteenth Century* cannot be interested to burden Britain with the investment of large capitals in armaments while Germany would be free to spend her money for the benefit of social, technical and economic progress. This "disarmed" Germany would even become a more dangerous enemy for Britain and the world. In April, 1938, Mr. Mowat, from the Bristol University, says in an article in the *Nineteenth Century*:

> Many people felt that German limitations of armament, Germany's demilitarised zones, could not go on for very long without some degree of reciprocity.

The same will be true of a Europe built again on the principles of Clemenceau and Versailles. The experiences with Nazi Germany make Mr. Voigt think every German regime after the collapse of Nazism unsuitable for an equal and just treatment. I wonder why the *Nineteenth Century* of June, 1938, was even ready to give a just and equal treatment to Hitler, too. Viscount Samuel said there:

> Justice should be done not only to countries of our own way of thinking; to be Liberal only towards Liberal States is not Liberalism at all.

The logical connection between this way of thinking, the then leading rule of British policy, and the present situation can be easily realised. A hostile and mistrusting attitude towards every German regime after Hitler will certainly create a second Hitler and consequently plunge the world into a third disaster. Only a friendly collaboration of all peoples of Europe with the democratic and anti-Nazi forces among the German people can save us. To imagine the world after Hitler's defeat again in the notions of 1919 signifies the preparation of a downfall in the same catastrophe which we are witnessing now.

GEORGE BRUNNER

E.P.T.

SIR,—I was at the Labour Party Conference at Bournemouth, and cannot recall—even at that Conference—that a word was said (it of course may have been thought) of the injustice of E.P.T. I would, however, refer Mr. Edwards to a Resolution carried at that Conference on "WAR FINANCE" which concluded "and calls for the immediate restriction of profit and the imposition of a levy upon capital."

This Resolution was carried—but not only was nothing serious done to put it into effect, but we have a Labour M.P. actually agitating against a Conference decision. Some are expelled for this "crime"—but others?—or is it that decisions of this nature are passed as a "sop" and there is no intention on the part of the leaders to do anything about it?

I would lay emphasis on the wording "*immediate* restriction of profit"—there's no "after the War" aspect about that, although Mr. Edwards has deferred the Capital Levy till after the War. It's important to remember that this Resolution was carried AFTER the decision of the Conference in support of Labour going in with the Government!

In his letter Mr. Edwards argues that the shareholders at the most would only benefit by another 8 per cent. and suggests that this is fair as the workers' standards have increased to this extent. Is this true?

Based on hours worked, conditions of working, and cost of living, is the worker 8 per cent. better off? If some are, it is certain that they are working harder, having literally no rest, but does he argue that the shareholders are working harder! I'd like to know how stocks and shares work harder and justify a greater reward to their owners.

What shocks me most is the whole attitude to the problem. It seems that Mr. Edwards argues that this concession must be given to the industrialists as otherwise they will not be bothering about efficiency and consequently our "soldiers, sailors and airmen will have less tools." Surely deliberate inefficiency can only be described as sabotage, and I hope Mr. Edwards has better ideas on how to deal with sabotage when it comes "from above," as I am sure he has when it is loosely alleged that it comes "from below."

To me it is a disgusting state of affairs that a Labour M.P. must offer more financial inducement to firms engaged in making munitions, etc.—not because of the risks they take, for it is the workers who are in the factories, not the shareholders—when he knows at the same time that millions of men have been conscripted (they did not let "complicated questions of compensation" deter them) at great financial loss to their wives, children and parents.

EDWARD MORGAN WILLIAMS

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

IT is a cold and foggy night. You are sitting by the fire reflecting that one of the things which reconciles you to life even at its most tragic is the low, clear, daily monotone of its voice; suddenly, comes a knock at the door, there are cries. A man has been murdered at a house down the street. Dostoevski again, Dostoevski, "the great sinner," the great literary murderer! You put on your thickest coat and go out. What a fog! What a melodramatic fog! Such is the impression as one turns to those tortured novels again. There's obviously a crowd somewhere down the road; you can hear voices, people go rushing by. Who is it this time? Shatov (you hear), the student, the ex-radical, the believer in the Russian Christ. There was no one more serious, more honest, more likeable than Shatov; rather difficult in argument because he had never got over a sort of angry awkwardness about his class. He was tongue-tied and shy one moment, violently angry the next. His anger soon passed, however, and then he smiled repentantly. There was absolutely no malice in Shatov. You hurry down the street, still seeing nothing. Shapes move about. They may be human. You call to them and they gesticulate, but you can't hear what they're saying. Presently you make a disconcerting discovery: that you are in something like a Kafka case; you are walking and yet making no progress. You begin to wonder which street you're in. People become clearer, they bump into you and don't answer questions. You just detect a scowling face which shouts at you. This one—an engineer, he says—shouts that he is going to commit suicide. It is necessary to commit suicide to show that he has overcome fear of pain and the beyond. When he has done this he will be God, the Man-God, the superman. He vanishes. A girl shape stands dumbly in front of you: she desires, you gather, to suffer. Which way to the murder? you ask. No answer. Terrible complications. The air is full of the sounds of people talking. A drunk Captain is beating his daughter and quoting poetry. You turn a corner and there's a young nobleman, handsome, cultivated, thoughtful, and what is he doing? He's biting the Governor's ear. And still, as in one of those anxiety-dreams, your feet stick to the pavement; you make enormous, concentrated efforts of will, and you move about an inch instead of a yard. The fog chokes. "Russia, the god-bearing nation," someone shouts. "Let us start a illegal printing press," a girl says. "Destroy everything," come other voices. "And then a new man will be born, a new society harmonious, communistic, brotherly." Or "Russia's mission is to save the world." And another voice, "Russia must save Germany first from the catastrophe which is coming inevitably in the West." And what is the catastrophe? "Socialism! Socialism is the despotism of materialism, the ally of the Roman Catholic Church in the destruction of the soul." You struggle towards that voice only to be pulled in the opposite direction by another. "Christianity, communism, through the People and the purification of the heart." At this moment you very nearly fall over a man who is on his knees before a woman, abased, weak and weeping: she is pulling his hair out. "Love-hate," they are murmuring. "Who," you ask, "are all these people, all these voices?" A moan comes from the man. "Relations," he says, "everyone has brought his relations."

And then, the tension of the nightmare slackens, the fog clears and along come a middle-aged couple and you laugh for the first time. They are quarrelling, of course. He is talking all the time. "Chère amie," he says as she gives him a violent push to make him shut up. Scholarly, noble-looking, vague and slopping a glass of champagne, Stepan Trofimovitch is straying and tottering along, pouring out epigrams, tag-ends of French and cultural chit-chat. Suddenly he stops to make a speech about his dangerous political past and is alarmed the moment afterwards lest a spy has heard him, or, worse still, in case someone lets on that he has no political past whatever and certainly no political future. And behind him comes Varvara Petrovina, 20 years his protector and "amie," but only in the sense that he used to smoke a cigar under the lilac tree with her in the evenings. A female rolling-pin, a torment and manager, she is pushing her tame intellectual and toy Liberal along, dusting him, cleaning him up, mocking his feebleness, flattering his brain, scorning him for his gambling debts but paying them. For the last 20 years he has talked of beginning his great book. But there is the club, his cards, the perpetual apprehension of what Varvara Petrovna will do next. He must leave her; he can't leave her. Man was born free, but not necessarily born with either will or cash, and all that he acquires is habits. And then he's been married so many times. It is years since Stepan Trofimovitch has seen his son. How terrible the separation of father and son—and yet, just as well, for Stepan Trofimovitch has never been quite straight about money. So he goes on, speaking French, weeping, evading, making noble gestures, cheating, scenting his handkerchief, making "final stands" about the intrigues of Varvara Petrovna—though not in her presence—while she, the masterful *intrigante*, frankly tells him he's a fool and that she's going to send a servant round to clean up and then marry him off.

The nightmare, of course, intercepts that comic intrigue. The fog comes down. But you have been distracted from the suicides, ear-biters, daughter-beaters and ideological murderers. As you grope once more it is the figure of Stepan Trofimovitch you seek, the bold voice of Varvara Petrovna you long to hear. He is in love with her, but here the love-hate is nostalgia and comedy. And then the nightmare affects Stepan Trofimovitch, too. He *does*, to his own astonishment, make a "last stand." He walks out of the house. Just like that. He will take to the road. They said he had not the will to do anything for "an idea." That his idealism was a fraud. He goes forth as exalted as Don Quixote, though far more rattled, follows a cow which is following some peasants, talks French, picks up with a Bible seller, and rambles away, tragically, comically, but far from ignobly to his death. Vanity is a friend to him to the end; it enables him to humbug a little more, this time about the Sacrament and prevents him from realising he is dying. It is he who explains the whole nightmare to you, all that fog, talk, intrigue, violence; who all these people are. They are "The Possessed," "The Devils"; and with the detachment of a well-stocked intellect he announces half-nobly, half-cynically that he and everyone else in Russian politics are the Gadarene swine of Russia which must all be cleared out and driven to the sea, so that the wonderful new future may be born.

I turned to *The Possessed* this week, after reading Mr. Ernest J. Simmons' *Dostoevski. The Making of a Novelist* (Oxford University Press, 16s. 6d.). It is a novel which contains one of the great comic characters of all literature; and the first 150 pages contain the best writing in Dostoevski's surprising comic vein. Lytton Strachey was the first to point out the individuality and importance of Dostoevski's humour. It steadies those toppling and seemingly intoxicated monuments. Critics usually refer to this gift as satirical, but, as Lytton Strachey said, the humour is not cruel. If it begins cruelly it grows, deepens and richens into the humour of loving-kindness. But there are other reasons for reading *The Possessed*. It is a political novel which—though many of its premises are derived from inaccurate information—deals prophetically with some of the political issues of our time. Tolstoy, not very sensitive in his old age, once said to Gorki that Dostoevski ought to have been a Buddhist; and Gorki said of Dostoevski that "you could tell a petit bourgeois as surely as you could tell a goat." These are amusing examples of a criticism which seems to be passing out of fashion now that the fanatical Freudians and the narrower kind of Marxist have discovered that they were not really interested in literature. The only proper general political criticism of Dostoevski, as Mr. Ernest Simmons says, is that he expresses the confusion in Russian middle-class thought at the time, its ideals, its apprehension, its practices. We see the psychological discoveries of Dostoevski in better perspective when we remember that Constant and many others had written about the ambivalance of human character. We cool down when we reflect that the Self-Willed Man, the Meek and the famous "doubles" of Dostoevski, are the fruits of the romantic movement which came to Russia late.

This is not to squeeze Dostoevski into the little pigeon-holes of literary criticism. As a literary critic indeed, Mr. Simmons is neither very original nor very profound, but his book has zest and thoroughness and has the virtue of bringing us half to earth. He traces the development of Dostoevski's main types from novel to novel and makes fascinating comparisons of the finished versions with the novelist's voluminous notes, rough drafts and diaries. One is brought into intimate touch with the creative process, and this is almost as engrossing as the novels themselves and never without touches of unconscious comedy. "I am planning a huge novel to be called *Atheism* (for God's sake between ourselves)." Or "(the hero) falls to the very depths of self-abasement and in the end he returns to find both Christ and the Russian soul, the Russian Christ and the Russian God. (For God's sake do not tell anyone.)" Tortured as the reader of the novels may be, lost in the acres of dialogue, worried by the involutions of the plot and the fact that no character seems to be able to appear without half his family and without at least one family skeleton, this is nothing to the suffering of Dostoevski himself at his desk. He chops and changes his characters, plots events and has constantly to write down the theme of his novel again in order to remind himself of what he is doing; and the theme changes. The change has been noted in *Crime and Punishment* and Raskolnikoff was intended for suicide. Ivan was thought of as the murderer in Karamazov. If Dostoevski's life was a spiritual search, his novels are a search for a method. The higher synthesis which he laboured after and retreated from in religion, only to labour after it again, plagued him, too, in the art of writing. The thing that strikes one in Dostoevski's novels is how, both in their ideas and their method of presentation, they convey the struggle, the search for something to be born, the longing to assume a shape. But perhaps it is not a longing for form. Perhaps there is a longing to be dominated. It is significant that a formal writer like Turgenev, who was made by the West, is hated, and that when Dostoevski looks beyond Russia, his eye stops at Germany. That domineering race has attractive wastes of primitive myth behind the façade of its culture; and when "the great catastrophe" comes, Russia will save Germany from the West and Germany and Russia will save the world. It is curious, as Mr. Simmons says, that the Nazis have not made use of Dostoevski's mysticism, though it goes

really far beyond nationalism into religion. The race myth is there:

"If a great people," Shatov cries, "does not believe that the truth is to be found in it alone (in itself alone and exclusively in itself), if it does not believe that it alone is fit and destined to raise up and save all by its truth, it at once ceases to be a great nation, and at once turns into ethnographical material and not into a great people. A truly great people can never reconcile itself with a secondary role in humanity or even with the first, but *without fail* must exclusively play the first role. A nation which loses this belief ceases to be a nation."

The Russians are, in fact, God-bearing!

It is useless to try and disentangle the confusions from the subtleties of Dostoevski's thought. The best prophets are really, underneath, playing for both sides. So much is journalism. There is always a less exalted strain of compromise running through Dostoevski's life, a sort of left-handed self-interest such as makes the comedy of Stepan Trofimovitch's character. There is frequently something disconcertingly practical if not disingenuous about the mystics. Ideologically, Dostoevski is often in a panic. Yet there are two perennial kinds of revolutionary thought: there is the political revolutionary who arises to change man by changing society, the religious who arises to change society by changing man. Dostoevski is brought nearer to us also because the catastrophe has come and the problem of suffering has become real; and if we cannot believe in the absolute value of suffering, any more than Dostoevski entirely did, it is arresting, when we cry out egotistically against injustice, to be reminded, as Zosima reminded Ivan Karamozov, of guilt.

Of course Dosetoevski was a spiritual sensationalist, a man of God somewhat stained with the printing ink of the latest editions. He lives at first in the upper air, as he plans his novels, and gradually comes down to earth, still undetermined until he is pulled up—by what? "Ordinary" life? No, a newspaper cutting. What a passion he has for the newspapers! What significance things had once they were in headlines! The report of the Nechaev affair clinches *The Possessed*, a *cause célèbre* sets the idea of *The Idiot* in motion. These court cases pinned down his restless mind. Early in *The Possessed* Liza asks Shatov to help her compile an annual collection of newspaper cuttings of all the court cases, trials, speeches, incidents and so on, the child-beatings, thefts, accidents, will suits, etc., etc., which would serve to give a real picture of the Russian situation year by year. Dostoevski must often have longed for a book like that on his desk. For ordinary people were lost in an anonymity which thwarted the romantic temperament. In the *faits divers* they were transformed; indeed the process of mystification could begin once it had been given a start. The *faits divers* become the *faits universels*.

V. S. PRITCHETT

THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE

The Beast from the Abyss. By HERMANN RAUSCHNING. *Heinemann.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Few books could be more difficult to sum up than this statement of Dr. Rauschning's political philosophy (illustrated with impressions of the bombing of London) which he has rather grandiloquently called *The Beast from the Abyss*, and in which the reader has a perpetual sense, while reading Dr. Rauschning the philosopher, of playing hide and seek with Dr. Rauschning the politician.

As a piece of Germanic *Weltanschauung* this book no doubt has its profound and illuminating moments, but the political thesis it presents between the lines is, to say the least, highly questionable. It does not solve, but only poses once again the central puzzle of Dr. Rauschning: how he ever came to throw in his lot with Hitler, Göring, Roehm, Heines, Goebbels and Co., who, in spite of Dr. Rauschning's nebulous explanations, were as vicious a crew of political gangsters in 1934 as the survivors are to-day; and why, if his motive was political ambition, he alone among so many German Tories should have broken with the Nazis to take up the thankless life of a political emigrant.

Or was there, in spite of his political blunders, a clear line in Dr. Rauschning's political career, with its dominant motif a mystic Conservatism and a strong conviction that Democracy—in his mind identified with "the masses"—was fatally wrong; so that the moment he realised the Nazi alliance would not restore a Conservative, feudal Germany, he placed himself at the side of the only force which might do so after a victorious war—the more reactionary and feudal elements of the British ruling class? Those "elements" whom he is now trying to warn and persuade that because the poor German Weimar Republicans and Social Democrats occasionally held vapid mass meetings and tried, rather unsuccessfully, to march with flags and songs,—*they*, and not the conspiring group of reckless army officers and big industrialists, were responsible for "the brown hordes"!

In spite of its general philosophical character, it is difficult not to feel that this book is a thesis written to this very specific end. Superficially, its theme can be summarised by Peter Drucker's apt journalist's phrase, "The End of Economic Man"—namely, that the present cataclysm is "not a war but a revolution," so profound a social, moral and political revolution, so great a historical watershed, that we cannot even yet map its extent. In a way this is true, and most of us would agree with Dr. Rauschning that Hitler has enormously widened our horizons. But, seizing on the political opportunity, Dr. Rauschning goes further to claim that the whole progress of four hundred years of modern history since the break-up of the medieval guilds has been on a fatally mistaken line, leading with *inevitability* (concentrate on this wave of the Prussian conjuror's handkerchief!) straight to the Beast from the Abyss—Hitlerism. Secular enlightenment, humanism, liberalism, the industrial and technical revolution, the French Revolution with its delusive and hence "destructive" slogans of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. The whole expanding world of Western Democracy seems to this Prussian philosopher only a presumptuous attempt to set up a human Utopia in our sinful vale of tears.

Hence, since Hitler and Mussolini and their evil satellites only represent eruption points in a sea of general human evil, war *à l'outrance* against German Right-wing militarism for instance, would be pointless, since this militarism has already been swallowed up (*Aber, Herr Rauschning!*) by the new Jacobinism.

Dr. Rauschning's remedy, sketched only in briefest outline, is a separation of "the State" from spiritual values, a return to an individual inner life, a pluralist social order once or twice referred to as Corporative; his hopes are placed in a new and essentially Conservative Atlantic English-speaking Empire, to which Germany can become a very secondary hinterland.

Well, well! To anyone acquainted with Germany of the Twenties, when behind the Republican façade *Reichswehr* officers and Ruhr heavy industrialists were steadily plotting their vast new rearmament programme, where the death-belching Junkers 87 dive-bombers were put through their paces two years before Göring seized the air ministry, Dr. Rauschning's claim that "evil" only appeared with the Nazis is grotesque. If the German Nationalists and army had been able to hold power in Germany without the Nazis, would they not certainly have attempted a war of revenge, with all the Beast-from-the-Abyss accompaniment of mass bombing and murder? Did not the majority of German Right-wing militarists of the Twenties, the men who would not accept the Republic, dream and hope for just such lightning military campaigns as those with which Generals Keitel and Brauchitsch have just presented them in Poland and France? In a general sense, of course, the confusions, the shortcomings of Western civilisation are to blame for Hitler. But while millions of others connived, it is equally true that it is a section of the German ruling class, that unchanged section called by Freiherr von Stein "the real Jacobins of Europe," which bears the direct responsibility for Nazism. Similarly, Dr. Rauschning's dislike for "the masses" who "cannot create civilisation but only consume it," who are mere pliable instruments in the hands of the planner and demagogue, amounts to a phobia. Who are these "masses" who apparently cannot resist the Dictators' fascination? The British air-raid wardens round the corner? The Norwegians who will never yield to Nazi evil as Dr. Rauschning and his aristocratic German friends did yield? The Greeks standing on their frontier? The African troops who are now gathering against Mussolini? If France may have proved Dr. Rauschning temporarily right, it may prove him wrong to-morrow. Certainly, at the highest and worst phase of unbridled capitalism, when the democratic world seemed thrown into chaos and confusion, the phenomenon of these despairing "masses" may have appeared here and there. Yet this era of disillusion—tabloid press, superfilms and planless inertia before unemployment and poverty—is already passed, even in America. Hitlerism itself has been the focal point against which an immense sweep of democratic reconstruction is slowly, painfully yet surely getting under way, with the "masses" well in the van.

Dr. Rauschning may prefer to see only twilight. He explicitly opposes the view, put forward, amongst others, by Sebastian Haffner and the group of Germans round *Die Zeitung*, that the German political emigrants should strive to prepare the ground for the future collaboration of a new Germany with Britain and America. This suggests that he would almost prefer Germany after Hitler to be a backwater of the "Atlantic Union," indirectly ruled by English or "Atlantic" Conservatives rather than a changed, free Germany under German Democrats and Socialists. This may be an unfair or exaggerated reading of Dr. Rauschning. Yet it is one which is not wholly unjustified until he comes politically into the open.

T. R. FYVEL

WHAT IS HISTORY?

History as the Story of Liberty. By BENEDETTO CROCE. *Allen and Unwin.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

It is a difficult and ungrateful task to criticise honestly this book by Signor Croce. It is difficult because the book itself is difficult to understand and difficult to read; it is ungrateful because there is so much in Croce's attitude and doctrine that one admires that one shrinks from seeming to range oneself upon the side of his adversaries. This is particularly so because among the things which one admires in him are some which are peculiarly valuable, and perhaps rare, to-day—unflinching intellectual courage and austere intellectual integrity. If, as he preaches and teaches, history is indeed only the story of liberty, if liberty is "the moral ideal of humanity," if the only men who count historically are the few spirits in whom liberty abides "purely and invincibly and consciously," then Croce practises what he preaches and is himself one of those rare spirits. The preface

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to his book is dated "Naples. January 1938." Implicitly, and in many passages explicitly, it is a challenge of the present rulers and regime in Italy on behalf of liberty. And the challenge, as befits a philosopher and historian, is delivered with a serenity and courage which make it doubly effective.

But admiration and sympathy cannot absolve the critic from criticism, and when it comes to Croce's historical and philosophical doctrine, there is much to criticise in it. His present book is really a collection of essays, but, as he claims in his Foreword, a unity of thought runs through them. He does not add anything new to the theory of history put forward in his previous works; he elaborates and emphasises certain aspects in that theory. He often himself says hard things about transcendentalism and mysticism, but he is himself fundamentally a transcendentalist and mystic. Like so many other philosophically minded historians or historically minded philosophers, he is profoundly exercised by the question: "What is history?" His own answer is by no means easy to grasp clearly. He maintains that history and philosophy are identified, and in order to distinguish them, when so identified, from all the false and petty varieties of "history," he calls them historiography. Historiography is not concerned with cause and effect, but it is the work of thought and reason. It is the story of liberty, for "liberty is the eternal creator of history, and itself the subject of every history." History as philosophy, interprets events in the past with a view to action in the present, and so "liberates us from slavery to events and to the past."

Such is the positive doctrine of Signor Croce. It is extremely difficult to grasp exactly what it means or implies. No "proof" is ever given when he lays it down that historiography is this or is that. The statements are *ex cathedra;* they are the statements of a mystic and you must accept them or not—if you can understand them—on his word for it. Take a statement like the one quoted above, that "liberty is the eternal creator of history." In a vague way one sees that there is some truth in this, but the sense in which Croce himself means it is purely mystical and you simply have to take his word for it. For it is quite reasonable for anyone to say that "economics is the eternal creator of history and itself the subject of every history," and there is really just as much and as little truth in the one statement as in the other. But Croce himself would have the greatest contempt for any one who made *ex cathedra* statements with regard to the relation between economics and historiography such as he himself makes with regard to the relation between liberty and historiography.

Croce is terrifically severe in his criticism of other historians or philosophers of history. But the more one reads of this eternal quarrel about "what is history?" the more one suspects that the quarrel is largely over definitions. Taine, of whom Croce thinks so poorly, was writing about certain aspects of past events connected with the communal life of the human race; Croce and the historians whom he would raise to the status of historiographers deal with other aspects. The one aspect may be more important than the other—and you may, if you like, quarrel over that; the one "historian" or the other may get his facts wrong or evolve a false theory for their interpretation—and there you may again find ground for a legitimate quarrel. But Croce, like so many others of his fellow quarrellers, is not content to define his terms and then get on with his business of a historian within the limits of his definition, leaving the others to do the same. He elevates his own definition into a kind of archetype or Platonic idea, so that any history which does not conform to this mystical historiography is not history at all, and he dismisses its practitioners to bombinate eternally in a vacuum. The extraordinary position into which his own definition or theory leads him is shown by his treatment of the relation between causality and historiography. He is particularly severe upon anyone who attempts to trace cause and effect in history; the writing of historiography or interpretation of past events preparatory to practical action depends, he says, upon thought, but, in so far as he makes it understandable, it is the result of revelation, intuition, or direct flash of vision, and there is no causalistic or deterministic link between historical knowledge and action. Yet whenever he argues about history or against other historians he at once slips into arguing about "cause and effect" as a determining factor in history. For instance, in discussing the "decadence" of liberalism in recent years, he writes: "In the range of social affairs the forces at work were the profound economic changes which robbed certain classes of importance and increased that of others. . . ." This sentence alone, with its clear recognition of causality in history, refutes a great deal of what Croce himself says about his historiography.

LEONARD WOOLF

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TWO AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

The Man on My Back. By ERIC LINKLATER. *Macmillan.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Half My Days and Nights. By HUBERT NICHOLSON. *Heinemann.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Towards the close of his autobiography Mr. Eric Linklater says that his purpose in writing it was "to reduce my ego to a little *i* with whom I could live and never notice him." He had found, he explains, that after finishing a novel he forgot all about the people in it, and it was his hope that an account of himself would have the same result. "I did not like myself," he writes, ". . . I deplored my diffidence, I despised my timidity, I abominated my false disguise of these indecencies. . . . I was, in short, by no means the kind of person I should have liked to be, nor with free will have chosen for my companion." This is extremely disarming, and the first impulse of a normally humane reviewer will be to treat Mr. Linklater with a most reassuring and delicate consideration. Unfortunately *The Man on My Back* is only at very rare intervals as sincere as in this passage. The title itself is an affectation. From the wrapper of the book one learns that there is a Norse proverb "Bare is his back who has no brother." Father Damien might, though it is unlikely that he would, have taken this proverb for the motto of his autobiography. But the man on Mr. Linklater's back puts in an appearance only in the last few pages, and even so is not a concrete human being, only a symbol of Mr. Linklater's transition from pacifism to an anger against Nazism which has led him to rejoin the Territorials, with whom he is at present serving in the coast defence of Orkney.

The book opens in the Orkneys, Mr. Linklater's birthplace. Among the more persistent of contemporary superstitions is the belief that to be born in some out-of-the-way place gives a man simplicity and depth, and if he becomes a writer endows him with a direct vision of reality. There has been a rich crop of seers from the outlying portions of the British Isles in the last thirty years or so. In one or two instances what they have seen has been well worth recording, but on the whole they have shown their talent chiefly in the skill with which they have exploited the innocence of persons living in William Blake's home town. How little of simplicity and directness Mr. Linklater has derived from his birthplace appears in the first sentence of his book. He is describing a lake in the Orkneys, and writes:

> The lake is subject to the sky, and about these northern islands the sky, from day to day, is a drunken hooligan, a dance of Cupids, a rout of silver-breasted Cuirassiers, a weeping savage, or a temple for the Princess of China. . . . A tight rabble of coots, rising in sudden alarm, with staccato clapping of their wings will scuttle in a crystal storm from the shelter of the bay. . . .

The book is full of this unreal picturesqueness. Owing to the diffidence which he laments, Mr. Linklater dramatises everything, emotions and incidents alike, obviously because he believes that the reader will not be interested in what he really felt and in what really happened to him. This is an illusion which ruins nine autobiographies out of ten. To the writer it seems of the first importance that his readers should not be disappointed in him, that they should lay down the story of his life feeling that they have been in contact with a complete human being. But readers are made of stouter stuff than that, and can bear very easily the disclosure of flaws and weaknesses which they are conscious that they also possess. There is, of course, a public for the kind of Odyssey which Mr. Linklater unrolls in his book, but the mournful sensibility which underlies his false disguises qualifies him to write a sincere record of his life. The book he has written will not induce the self-forgetfulness he desires, the book he is capable perhaps of writing might reconcile him to himself.

Mr. Hubert Nicholson is at the opposite extreme from Mr. Linklater. He likes himself very well, and, slightly to alter Miranda's confession to Ferdinand, would not choose any companion in the world but himself. "Here was Hubert Nicholson," he writes on arriving in Bristol, "breathing and alive and his own master. Partings, torn friendships; home, the circle, love; I ran over them lightly in my mind and none of them gave me the slightest pang." Mr. Nicholson, who is thirty-three, passed his early years in Hull, has been a reporter in Bristol, Cheltenham and Fleet Street, and has been twice married. Being a

reporter, he tends to exaggerate each episode while he is writing about it, and then to drop it abruptly. The story of his life is rather incoherent, but much of it is vividly and amusingly told. "The self," he says, "is mostly mirage and reflection," so he keeps on the whole to the surface of things, and though he tells us a good deal about his first wife he becomes embarrassed and ambiguous at the point where the reader's interest is highest. "My season in hell" he calls the breakdown of his marriage, adding that it carried its own lesson, but not disclosing what the lesson was. However, the book contains many interesting stories about well-known persons, the best being an interview Mr. Nicholson had over the telephone with Bernard Shaw. Having rung Shaw up to ask his opinion of a poem Mr. Masefield had just written on the Merchant Navy, he read out a passage beginning—

By them we make our money and are fed,
Let England, doing Justice, honour these

and awaited Shaw's verdict. "If Mr. Masefield has written it," Shaw replied, "then it must be all right. He is Poet Laureate." Pressed for his opinion of the Laureateship, he said that he did not see why it should not exist, "and since it does exist, Mr. Masefield is a very worthy person to have it."

HUGH KINGSMILL

MR. WINN

On Going to the Wars. By GODFREY WINN. *Collins.* 5s.

Mr. Winn is a journalist who in the past has excited a good deal of merriment, and who in the future may excite no less justified alarm. For he has gained a popularity almost as great as that of Mr. Horatio Bottomley in the last war. He has an uncanny gift for discovering and putting into words the inarticulate emotions of the less thoughtful among his fellow-countrymen—or, rather, he by nature feels as they do. After Munich, for instance, Mr. Chamberlain was in his eyes comparable with Christ. Now whether Munich was strategically wise or unwise, it was not Peace with Honour, and it was not Peace for our lifetime: it was a breathing-space with dishonour, and certain war soon. These facts should have been obvious to any man who used his mind, but Mr. Winn spontaneously shared the hysterical relief felt by the thousands of innocent souls who sent flowers to Mrs. Chamberlain, and thus confirmed Hitler's opinion that the English were a degenerate people that he could afford to neglect. Mr. Winn, in fact, does not use his mind—he has made his success by refusing to use it, by acting as a barometer to the veering mass-emotions of England.

To-day those emotions are healthy in the extreme, and accordingly Mr. Winn's book of collected war-reporting rarely sinks into the silliness that disfigured his pre-war writings. If he is at present the most influential journalist in the country, it is because he has known better than any other how to write and to speak—he is a considerable orator—about the fortitude and cheerfulness in the grimmest conditions that a people which seemed soft has everywhere exhibited. He obviously possesses great personal courage—though a hundred other journalists would have been happy to have his opportunities—and has flown in bombers on patrol, sailed in minesweepers and stayed on lightships. But he possesses a rarer gift, the ability to gain quickly the liking and the confidence of the individuals he meets on such expeditions. (When he speaks in public, those who came to scoff remain to applaud.) The reporting in this book is often sentimental, but it is vivid—and its emotionalism is doubtless infectious. It will not appeal to sophisticated readers—he is not writing for them, but there is one complaint that can legitimately be made. Mr. Winn writes on his last page: "Let us never forget that we are waging this war so that all men shall be able to live free lives hereafter and have a place in the sun." Such sentiments do him credit. He also says that in every job there are "opportunities to get out of a dead end, but it is up to the individual to take them, and if he does not, well, it's no good later on accusing the system of having enslaved him." That so poisonous and thoughtless a defence of social injustice can still be offered without a blush to a largely proletarian public is very saddening. After reading this, one is not surprised that Mr. Winn so rarely uses his popularity to demand immediate and concrete improvements for those whose heroism he celebrates. When, for instance, he visited a Naval training-camp in winter, the material conditions were in many ways scandalous: there was no heating, no means even of drying the men's clothes. But Mr. Winn either did not trouble to discover this, or did not care to publish the fact. He is now too popular to be gagged by any editor, newspaper-proprietor or Government Department, even if they wished to gag him. Is it not time that he awoke to the responsibilities attendant upon success, and demanded concrete improvements for the simple people he so justly praises.

ROGER MARVELL

THE NEW DEMOCRACY

Democracy's Last Battle. By FRANCIS WILLIAMS. *Faber.* 8s. 6d.

Francis Williams is the sturdiest of democrats. He does not believe that historical tendencies or technical changes need destroy the essential characteristics of our civilisation; he starts with the assumption that there can still be a dynamic in democracy capable of re-creating and transforming a pluto-democracy without driving it into any form of totalitarianism. We are faced, he says, with a triple challenge: and he proceeds to a shrewd analysis of the Fascist, Nazi and Communist systems and describes the conditions that gave them their chance and the methods used to buttress their power. He concludes his study of Communism by saying that its success in the U.S.S.R. was largely due to the incomparable ability of Lenin and Trotsky, who alone appreciated the revolutionary possibilities and easily defeated all rivals; he argues that Communism, in spite of the greater difficulties in a developed and bourgeois country, has lost even better opportunities in Germany and elsewhere than it ever had in Russia. He holds that, with the growing nationalism of Stalin's Russia, Communism has ceased to be an important world force. Of Italian Fascism he has no fear as a rival to democracy; it is, he says, an administrative system rather than a creed, and here too he attributes its success to the weakness and mistaken tactics of the social democrats and Trade Unions and to the skilful gangster leadership of Mussolini. Similar factors brought to birth the far more dangerous movement of National Socialism which differs from Fascism not only in being German and far more powerfully armed, but also in being a really "popular movement, an expression of mass mythology," and in appealing to those elements of revolt against civilised society that exist in every country and, to some extent, in every dissatisfied or frightened human being. Democracy, Mr. Williams believes, can withstand that onslaught from within and without if, and only if, it reforms itself.

All this analytic discussion, which takes half of Mr. Williams's book, is ably constructed and excellently written. It does not neglect economic forces, but it ranges the author definitely on the side of those who believe that the accidents of personality and the force of doctrine decide which of the conflicting tendencies in society will at any time be successful. The second half of this book is devoted to a realistic but persuasive account of the structure of our unequal

HOVIS
IT'S RICH IN VITAMIN 'B'
BEST BAKERS BAKE IT

EASTER 194
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society, our economic conservatism and class divisions, the psychological forces which hold us together, the press (on which Mr. Williams, once editor of the *Daily Herald*, contributes a particularly illuminating section), the pulpit and the educational opportunities we offer our children. He provides here some delicious illustrations. Let me quote one:

> I once had a pleasant friend who had been to one of the better-known Public Schools, where he had remained obstinately in a lower form throughout his career, but who, when he became an adult and set out to seek his fortune, proved to be sufficiently good at Rugby football to play for a well-known club fifteen. There was thus one obvious career open to him. He became a schoolmaster. He was given the important task of teaching a number of the future middle-class citizens of Britain English language and literature, of which he knew little, and history, of which he knew less. He was an impressionable young man greatly susceptible to feminine charm and he found himself easily and frequently falling in love, often with the daughter of the headmaster of the school to which he was for the moment attached. At such times his ambition was fired. He desired wider conquests and a higher remuneration than are commonly provided by the teaching profession. He sought another job. And since he was an amiable and friendly young man with many successful acquaintances, he often succeeded in finding one. He was in a bank, he was in a motor-car dealer's, he was in a shipping office, he was in a big retail stores. The result was always the same. After a month or so he found his natural level and was put out into the street. But he was not daunted. On all such occasions he followed an invariable procedure. He dressed himself neatly, put on his school tie, draped his Rugby Club scarf round his neck, and made his way to an educational employment agency. The combination of tie and scarf never failed. He immediately found himself offered another teaching post and went blithely off to fall in love with a new headmaster's daughter.

Mr. Williams ends with a discussion of the economic changes that war necessitates. He points out that these can be turned to the advantage or to the destruction of democracy, and proceeds to a very useful outline of the sort of organisation that he thinks the democracies might achieve in the world, provided they win the war without surrendering the substance of power into the hands of the industrial monopolists. A very useful and thoughtful book.

TOM PAINE

NEW NOVELS

Through the Eyes of a Woman. By ZSOLF VON HARSANY. *Routledge.* 9*s.*

English Story. Edited by WOODROW and SUSAN WYATT. *Collins.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Through the Eyes of a Woman is a novel which shows the inevitable tragedies that arise from a sheltered life. The eyes of this particular woman, Magdalena von Hubay, a Hungarian, are fixed relentlessly on a foreground of love. The long years when she is not having a love affair remain blurred and motionless in the background; even her parents and her own children come into focus only when they are related to her passion. There are five men in Magdalena's life and the only one she never falls in love with is her husband. Beginning when she is seventeen, there is a vivid, accurate account of a young girl's curiosity about men, and her longing to have power over them and for them to have power over her. Already a young officer is in love with her so that she finds it easy to imagine she loves him too. But she discovers that, while staying in her house and writing her love notes, he is asking her maid to come to his bedroom. The shock and disillusionment she suffers form a pattern which is repeated in all her subsequent affairs. She never learns her lesson and is just as much shattered by infidelity in her last lover as in her first. As an immature girl before marriage she cannot be blamed for expecting ideal love to stay at a passionate, concentrated pitch, nor for being hurt when her lovers' former habits and normal interests begin distracting their attention from her. At forty-nine, however, lack of wisdom can only be an irritating quality. In her last love affair Magdalena's justified suspicions, feverish demands for attention, and misery when she is no longer loved make one sorrier for the man than for her.

> To her surprise she was aware that she felt elated. In a flash she was elated because Kelen was jealous of her. For, as long as he was jealous, it showed that he loved her.

She still is unaware that jealousy stands by the grave long after love is dead, and is one of the last emotions to disappear.

But the reason she never grows up is not her own fault. She marries without love at eighteen because her conventional parents are responsible for the disastrous time-lag between her desire and her knowledge. The young girl who is practically never alone with a man before marriage is now luckily an anachronism, but this novel also shows the frustration in a woman's life when she is unaware of sexual pleasure until many years after her marriage.

The other figures in the book are stock characters, but they are very well described. There is the loving, puzzled father; worldly, fretful mother; precise, dominating husband, a middle-aged rake, whose side one cannot help taking; a writer who is interested only in himself falling in love and not in the object of his love. The least convincing characters are the too brisk, modern daughter, and Magdalena's plebeian last lover who falls in love with her because she represents a world he longs for. The translation is smooth and good but trips up occasionally, as do many translations, over the slang. The father's use of "Devil take it" and the young girl's awe at her friend being allowed to use the word "topping" remind one that slang must be adjusted to a particular date or should be entirely modern.

The author, a man, sees very exactly through the eyes of his heroine, who all her life is looking for something she cannot find, a man she loves who will never flag in his love for her and who will not deceive her. Her demands upon men are so rigorous that she is bound to fail, and her final solution is the only answer, but it is an inevitably passive answer. An intelligent and more than readable novel.

English Story was intended to be a bi-monthly magazine, but owing to war difficulties is being published as a book at half-yearly intervals. Unfortunately many of the stories seem to spring from emotions derived from reading other writers rather than from anything original felt by the authors. The resulting dimness produces exasperation, so that the few freshly written stories are a relief as well as a pleasure. The preface says that an Advisory Committee decided on "borderline stories"; it is possible that had the book remained a magazine with less content, these would have been returned. The main fault in the bad stories is the trumped-up emotion that makes them completely meaningless. There is Frances Bellerby who, we are told in the short autobiography that follows each story, "has always been in a state of writing or being-about-to-write."

> That was what life did to you. You grew up, you loved, and then happiness made you long to die! Wonderful, beautiful life, thought Grania. And fiercely she gripped the old window-sill and stared at the sky, seeing nothing for tears. "I know it too," cried Grania, alone to the vast sky. "Oh, tell Loraine I know that happiness too." And in her body something really seemed to be leaping, struggling to break loose, something wild and ecstatic—battering at her body, struggling to break out and shoot away through the night, straight into the calm depth of that vast and starry sky.

Surely this should have remained "about-to-be written"? But with J. P. Hogan in "Whom God hath Joined" it seems even more essential that he should have been forever about-to-write-it. His autobiography describes him as "introvert and quietist." His story resembles an introvert and quietist Sapper, if such writing can be imagined.

The same unreality is found in "The Duck Shoot" by Leslie Paul. The gap between what he feels and what he says is crossed by a stereotyped bridge and neither side is worth reaching. Nicholas Moore is a promising writer in verse, but in "Sea Drift" his gift for occasional poetical sentences does not make up for such sentences as these:

> In summer it was fine to be here with wood and knife. He cut a mad girl from the knots, one breasted, squint-eyed, old. He loved her for the shape he had made of her.

Most of the authors fall either into over-elaboration of trivial subjects or into over-simplification of large subjects. J. Wood Palmer with "The Black Cloak" contributes one of the overspun examples about a sensitive boy who cannot get on with his family.

> "Anthony will never join in with the others," his mother's voice said in an echo. . . . A young boy to be spending hours mooning about by himself, to be reading Elizabethan dramas for pleasure when there was squash and tennis and dances to go, there was something not quite comfortable about it and inclined to make the holidays difficult.

But unless new light can be shed on the difficulties of a thoughtful child with a philistine family there already exists an encyclopedia of first novels which tell one all there is to be known on the subject. "The Rover's Return" by T. Thompson provides the opposite extreme of simple writing failing to give body to an extravagant idea.

Scattered through the book, however, are very good stories. Sylvia Townshend Warner is excellent and so is Arthur Calder-Marshall with "Before the War," and there are good stories by Neil Bell and G. D. Stetton. Winifred Williams has an unusual, interesting contribution, and it is noticeable that, in common with the other good stories, her autobiographical snippet is unpretentious. Probably the high standard of these last writers will be more generally maintained in the second volume of *English Story*.

DIANA WITHERBY

Week-end Competitions

No. 584

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We offer a first prize of Two Guineas and a second prize of Half a Guinea for the best sets of three Clerihews on the subject of famous criminals. To avoid the risk of libel or a tedious concentration upon Germans, only dead criminals are eligible.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, April 21st.
2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 581

Set by Robinson Moody

A first prize of two guineas and a second prize of half a guinea are offered for the best extract from a panegyric upon Dr. Vaughan Williams in the style of any of the English poets. Entries not to exceed twelve lines.

Report by Robinson Moody

Dr. Vaughan Williams is the undisputed *doyen* of British composers, and his action was comparable in dignity with Toscanini's treatment of the Fascist

ASSOCIATED PORTLAND CEMENT MANUFACTURERS

A DIFFICULT YEAR

SIR MALCOLM STEWART'S STATEMENT

THE Forty-second Annual General Meeting of The Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers Limited will be held at the Federation of British Industries, 21 Tothill Street, Westminster, S.W., on April 17th.

The following is an extract from the speech of the chairman, Sir P. Malcolm Stewart, Bt., O.B.E., D.L., LL.D., which has been circulated with the report and accounts.

The chairman, dealing with the accounts, states that the net profit for the year amounted to £539,648, as compared with £741,981 for the previous year. Two interim dividends of 5 per cent. each on the Ordinary Stock in respect of the year have been paid, leaving £2,148 to be added to the carry-forward, which will then amount to £215,328.

He continues: Trading conditions during the early months of last year were unsatisfactory, deliveries being exceptionally low, influenced by the extreme severity of the weather experienced. Change came with startling suddenness. Three major events coincided, and these brought about an abnormal demand, which proved to be short-lived. There was the acceleration of the Government factory construction programme, the heavy requirements for defence works, following the withdrawal of the B.E.F. from France, and also for A.R.P. work. Difficulty in giving prompt delivery, at the same time, to all these demands was much increased by the lack of adequate transport facilities. The consequences of this passing phase of coincident occurrences caused alarm.

It was erroneously assumed in some quarters that there would be a serious shortage of cement. This was the position last autumn. What is the situation to-day? The industry holds in stock over one million tons of cement and cement clinker and it looks as though a number of important factories will be compelled to reduce production because their cement silos and warehouses are filled to capacity.

CEMENT MAKERS' FEDERATION

Since there would appear to be a considerable degree of ignorance as to the performance and policy of the Cement Makers' Federation, I will briefly refer to its war work and aims and to what it has accomplished in recent years. The Cement Makers' Federation, alive to the need for a small body that could take prompt action, shortly after the outbreak of hostilities appointed a War Executive Committee which has worked continuously, placing national interests first and giving all Government departments concerned the fullest help and support in dealing with the inevitable difficulties arising out of the war. In October, 1939, its Executive Committee passed a resolution urging all members to expand production to the utmost possible extent regardless of any consideration. But the determination of the industry to provide for the future was given effect to long before the outbreak of war. Between the years 1934 and 1938 it increased its annual production capacity by no less than two and a quarter million tons. This heavy expansion of capacity was mainly outside the Thames and Medway area and far exceeded any normal requirements due to growth of demand; indeed we were faced with the problems arising from over-production.

Let us now consider the results procured through the co-operation of the members of the Cement Makers' Federation. A weak industry, suffering from adversity and paying the lowest rates of wages, has been transformed into a prosperous industry paying good wages and making provision for the welfare of its workers. Rational control of the industry based on close co-operation has put the members of the Cement Makers' Federation in a position to make heavy expenditure on improvements in plant and process so as to secure a high degree of efficiency and to manufacture Portland cement of much improved quality.

COSTS AND SELLING PRICE

I will give you a few figures relating to our group of companies.

In the 15 years prior to the outbreak of war we reduced the average per ton cost of production by 32.3 per cent. During the period the cost of purchased materials was much increased. Let us see how the consumer has fared. Has he shared in the proceeds arising from reduced costs of production? He certainly has most substantially, since the net naked average price per ton received by us at works from the consumer was in the 15 years pre war reduced by 35 per cent. It goes without saying that this reduction in selling prices could not have been achieved had we not been able greatly to increase production and deliveries.

Let us now see how we have dealt with our employees, and this is of primary importance. Between 1925 and May, 1939, six advances in wages, totalling 12s. per week, were granted by the National Joint Industrial Council. Further, thanks to the harmonious working between the manufacturers and the Trade Union delegates on the Council, the industry has been free from strikes and lock-outs. At the same time a good return has been made to our stockholders and the financial position of the Companies has been strengthened. Efficiency, the vital factor in industry, bringing low overhead charges and reduced costs of production, has been achieved despite the increased costs of materials and the advances in wages to our workers. Thus have the benefits accruing from co-operation through the Cement Makers' Federation been fairly shared.

POST-WAR PROBLEMS

The recent creation by the Government of the Ministry of Works and Buildings, with Lord Reith as Minister, is a step in the right direction towards solving the practical problems of reconstruction and planning. The industry welcomes Government control in wartime, since we court investigation. The effective organisation of the Federation is considerably facilitating the task.

The staff and workmen at the various works and offices of the Company have instituted their own war savings groups and the aggregate amount subscribed by those groups is already over £50,000. You will agree this is an excellent response to the national savings appeal.

We have now over 1,400 employees with H.M. Forces. Many have rendered outstanding service for which recognition has been made.

In these times it is obvious that any forecast must be hedged with caution. The year has opened disappointingly, the demand being weak. Transport and production may become more difficult and dislocated, but even if this does not happen I feel we shall be fortunate if the demand absorbs the tonnage produced. Thus the present outlook does not warrant my leading you to look for the submission next year of results which will show an improvement on those now before you.

and Nazi regimes. Competitors, it must be admitted, have not risen to the occasion; we live in a world to which satire comes more easily than panegyric, and good will does not, alas, necessarily make good verses. Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Marvell, Tennyson, Browning, Keats, Shelley, Swinburne, Cory, Kipling, and W. H. Davies were among the poets imitated. Nobody, to my surprise, attempted Dryden, and Allan M. Laing's Pope was not up to his usual high standard. Private Bernard Denvir sent a handsome "Exequie" in the style of Donne:

Let all the Cymrik fountaines gush their diamond streames
And drown in salt, sad waves that Precious Hope of ours,
Who here lies dead.

But I am thankful to say that there is no occasion for an Exequy, and though I admire Dr. Vaughan-Williams's music no less than his character, it seems a little fulsome to refer to him as a "Precious Hope." Gordon Simpson sent a Calverley, ingeniously rhyming Vaughan Williams with "Fascist Deliriums." L.M.S. points out that there are occasions when the piper calls the tune; Feliz W. Leakey sends some Whitman, respectable but not brilliant. None of the contributors produced a fine text, such as I was hoping for, that could be set to music. Winsome's Swift is one of the best entries:

He's quiet, sober—and that's more
Than ever a fiddler was before.
"His music?"—Well, sir, there you've got me,
I'd sooner talk of hippopotami.

I recommend, however, that the first prize go to Leslie Johnson, and the second to Charles Furbank, whose verses are flat but honestly Wordsworthian.

FIRST PRIZE

(Extract from a poem by the shade of Thomas Hood)

The Governors who would refuse
To let the air be free,
So far from having modern views,
Are found to be B.C.
The works of Bush to loyal ears
Would give a nasty jolt;
Perhaps indeed (so ran their fears)
Might make Sir Adrian bolt.
But Williams gave a sudden shock
To those who'd bought his lay.
They did not have to pay the doc,
For he has docked his pay.

LESLIE JOHNSON.

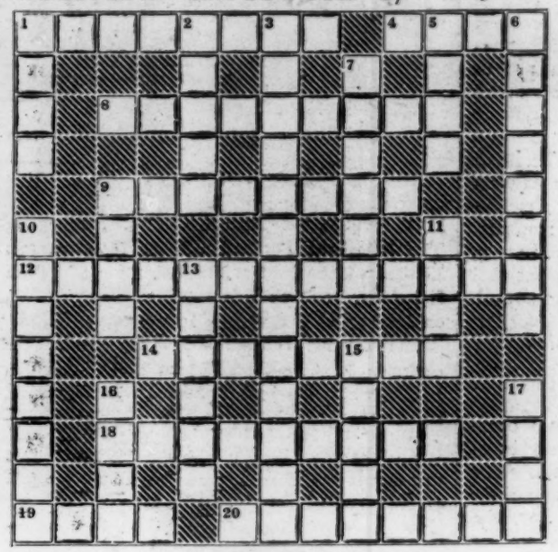
SECOND PRIZE

In praise of Dr. Vaughan Williams on the sad occasion of the suspension of the Leith Hill Festival.
(In the manner of Wordsworth).

Where by that hill may you hear music now,
Or rural choirs, rehearsing harmonies
So they acquire a goodly unison
To grace your festival; and yet I hear
The solemn recitation of those notes
That make your name a trumpet to the true
And earnest in mankind, amidst the wind.
Whilst interfused with these, the heather winds
The simple airs of country operas.
The music of these islands is not still
And may not be while your especial voice
Gives utt'rance to its innate harmonies. . . .

CHARLES FURBANK.

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 27 *Set by* V. S.



The last week's winner is:

[No correct solution to last week's Crossword was received.]

ACROSS—

1. Bit added on to the fourth act to make a moving effect. (8)
4. Sunders? (4)
8. Signet ring! (9)
9. Song of praise about America. (8)
12. Milton's "Neat repast . . . and choice"? (5 hyphen 3 & 5)
14. Huge fun and frolic. (8)
18. Th - thieving. (9)
19. What cheer? Ask Cowper—it's his job to tell you. (4)
20. Orgies provided for out of the local rates. (8)

DOWN—

1. Bill married me in the crisis. (4)
2. Tanner or Film King. (5)
3. A mechanical contrivance, so music-lovers contend in *The Ring* (3, 7 & 3)
5. Prison - breaker. (4)
6. Contrariwise, my answer is "Rats!" (4 & 4)
7. It's a bold woman who takes five wild Irish on leave. (6)
9. Take your hat off to the East End. (4)
10. Might convey the art of plumbing. (4 hyphen 4)
11 *rev.* Imposes an extra shilling on the delivery charge (4)
13 *rev.* Bear the consequences of a sinful operation. (6)
15. It's something that you've got in with the extremists. (5)
16. Miss no midday meal even when it is little more than nothing. (4)
17. We can take it—and how! (4)

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

■	R	I	D	I	N	G	S	U	I	T	S	■
V	■	■	R	■	O	■	G	■	■	■	■	Q
I	■	R	A	■	O	■	H	■	W	■	■	U
C	■	O	T	■	D	■	T	■	H	■	■	A
A	N	Y	■	E	V	A	N	S	■	O	U	R
R	■	A	■	■	F	■	■	■	L	■	■	T
I	■	L	E	A	S	T	W	I	S	E	■	E
O	■	T	■	■	E	■	■	■	S	■	■	R
U	N	I	■	C	O	R	N	S	■	O	R	D
S	■	E	■	L	■	N	■	T	■	M	■	E
L	■	S	■	I	■	O	■	A	■	E	■	C
Y	■	■	■	N	■	O	■	M	■	■	■	K
■	A	P	I	G	I	N	A	P	O	K	E	■

Books to the value of Five Shillings may be chosen by the sender of the first correct solution opened. Post solutions to arrive not later than first delivery Wednesday following the date of issue, addressed to "CROSSWORDS," "NEW STATESMAN AND NATION," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

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LECTURES AND MEETINGS

ETHICAL CHURCH, Queensway, Bayswater, W.2. Morning Service only. April 13th, at 11.30. Mrs. NINA SPILLER: "AN INTERNATIONAL CLUB IN LONDON."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn. Sunday, April 13, NO MEETING.

JOAD on "PROSPECTS OF CIVILISATION," April 20, Friends Meeting House, Heath Street, Hampstead, 3 p.m. Free.

THE POSITION OF SOCIALISM IN THE WORLD TODAY. Mass Rally. Conway Hall. 6.30. Sunday, April 13. Speakers: E. HARDY, C. LESLIE, A. TURNER. Socialist Party of G.B. Admission Free.

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Company Meeting

VICKERS LIMITED

THE Seventy-fourth Annual General Meeting of Vickers Limited was held on April 3rd in London, presided over by Mr. A. A. Jamieson, the chairman of the company.

The chairman's statement, circulated with the accounts, contained the following remarks :—

I can give my assurance that the whole strength and energy of this Group of Companies are directed to ensure that punctual deliveries of our products are made to the Service Departments.

The accounts submitted are evidence that the business affairs of the company are in sound condition and only two items appear to require elucidation. Firstly, the Metropolitan-Cammell Company repaid the balance of debenture stock outstanding; secondly, the dividends on the preference stocks are shown this year after deduction of tax.

I desire to acknowledge the co-operation of the Service Departments in our efforts to carry on production in spite of the difficult conditions inevitably existing in wartime, and I record with real gratitude the courage and determination of those of our workpeople who have faced severe trials. The work of those employees who have given up their leisure to train themselves in A.R.P. duties has proved invaluable in emergency.

During the past year there have been many difficulties to overcome, but the staff and workpeople in this Group of Companies have proved that they are competent to foresee and to overcome difficulties which appeared to be truly formidable.

Schemes have been formulated for each of the Works in order to encourage savings in War Savings Certificates, and more than 600,000 Certificates have been applied for through the medium of these Schemes during 1940.

At the request of the Government the services of Sir Charles Craven were placed at their disposal in May; at my request he was released in November from his duties with the Government in order to resume his position with this organisation.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted and the final dividend of 6 per cent. approved.

Company Meeting

BRITISH TYRE AND RUBBER

THE annual general meeting of the British Tyre and Rubber Co., Ltd., was held in London on April 7th.

Sir Walrond Sinclair, K.B.E. (chairman and managing director), said that the net profit for the year, subject to taxation, amounted to £318,506, which with £54,033 brought forward totalled £372,539. From this sum provision for taxation took £150,000. Preference dividend paid for the year to 31st May, 1940, was £13,500 net, premium and expenses on redemption of debenture stock £124, interim Ordinary dividend of 3½ per cent. £19,687, while there were transfers to contingencies reserve £40,000, amount written off goodwill, etc., £12,500, and allocation to general reserve £25,000. The net results, after making these deductions, left a disposable balance of £111,728.

At the general meeting held on 8th October, 1940, a further interim dividend of 4½ per cent., less tax, on Ordinary shares, requiring £23,288, was authorised and subsequently paid, and the directors now recommended a cash bonus of 3 per cent., less tax, which would absorb £15,525, leaving £72,915 to be carried forward.

It would be inadvisable to give the usual full and frank review of the company's progress. While profits had increased there were certain factors which could not be ignored. The productive capacity of the company and its subsidiaries was being completely utilised.

The accounts under review covered six months of the E.P.T. rate at 60 per cent. and the second six months at 100 per cent. If no change took place future profits, above a certain figure, would be subject to the full rate of 100 per cent. The Excess Profits Tax was frequently referred to as a tax on profits above a pre-war level, but in their case a long series of plant expansions and progressive profits before the war meant that there would be an appropriation to the Exchequer of 100 per cent. of all profits above what was to them an artificial and arbitrary level. The Report and Accounts were adopted.

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REFUGE
ASSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED

Chief Office: Oxford Street, Manchester, 1.

Summary of Directors' Report for the year ended 31st December, 1940.

Total Income for the year, **£13,192,498.**

Total Assets at end of the year, **£74,606,552.**

Total Claims Paid in the year, **£8,162,981.** The Company has paid **£133,337,630**, in claims since its establishment.

The Total Assurances existing on December 31st, 1940 amounted to **£82,055,091** in the Ordinary Branch and **£118,099,919** in the Industrial Branch.

Ordinary Branch: Bonus of £1 per cent. for 1939 and 1940 declared on participating policies which become claims during the ensuing year. Surplus carried forward is £1,273,235.

Industrial Branch: £400,000 Profits allocated to Policyholders.

J. WILCOCK HOLGATE, *Chairman.*